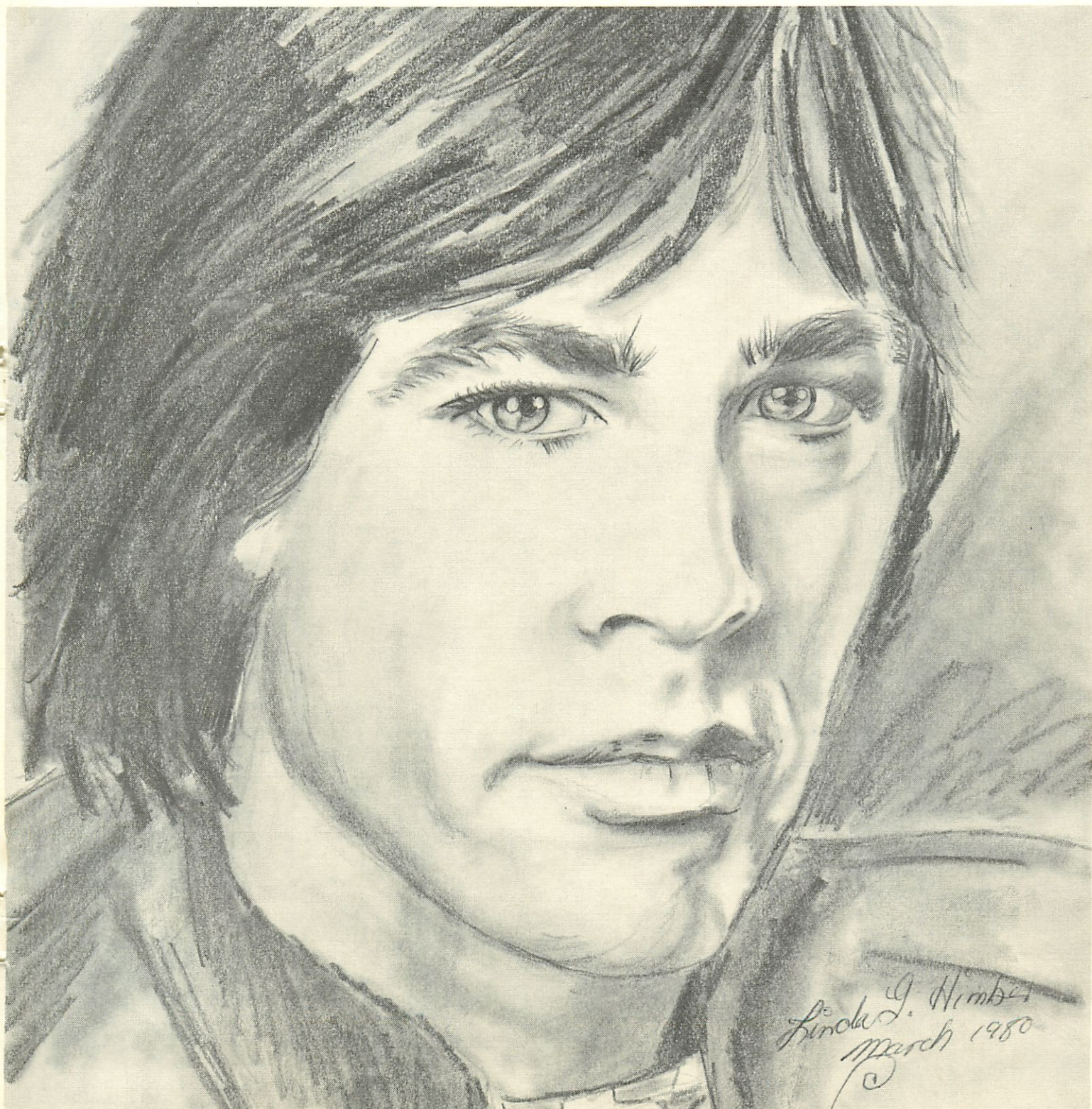


PURPLE ORANGE?



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"Purple and Orange?" is intended solely for the enjoyment of fans of the ABC-TV series BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and is the official publication of Battlestar OSIRIS, c/o The New Fantasy Shop, 5651 West Belmont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60053

Submissions and letters of comment are both encouraged and welcomed.

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Colonel Lyra's Log

Commander Christopher called me to the bridge. "Colonel," he said, "we are entering a planetary system. Arrange scouting parties along the most direct routes. Your pilots are looking for tylium, or a habitable planet." There was a very long pause. "Tell them not to waste a drop of fuel, Lyra. We're so short we may need that planet." That is how my day started. It was not pleasant to think about abandoning the OSIRIS with the Cylons breathing down our necks.

We were lucky. One of our patrols found tylium readings. And that isn't all; the fourth planet out from the star also had a breathable atmosphere. I sent my crews down.

When I was sure everything was running smoothly, I took my Viper and headed for the planet. The ground crews are efficient, and mining was making good progress. One shuttle had already returned to the OSIRIS.

My pilots were looking rather glum, however. To conserve fuel, they had been ordered to land, with only one Viper at a time allowed in the air on scan. Rotation was to be rather rapid, but I suppose they were all feeling a little exposed with only one Viper up.

Captain Diana came over to me. "Colonel, don't you think we should at least escort the shuttles? If they don't get back..."

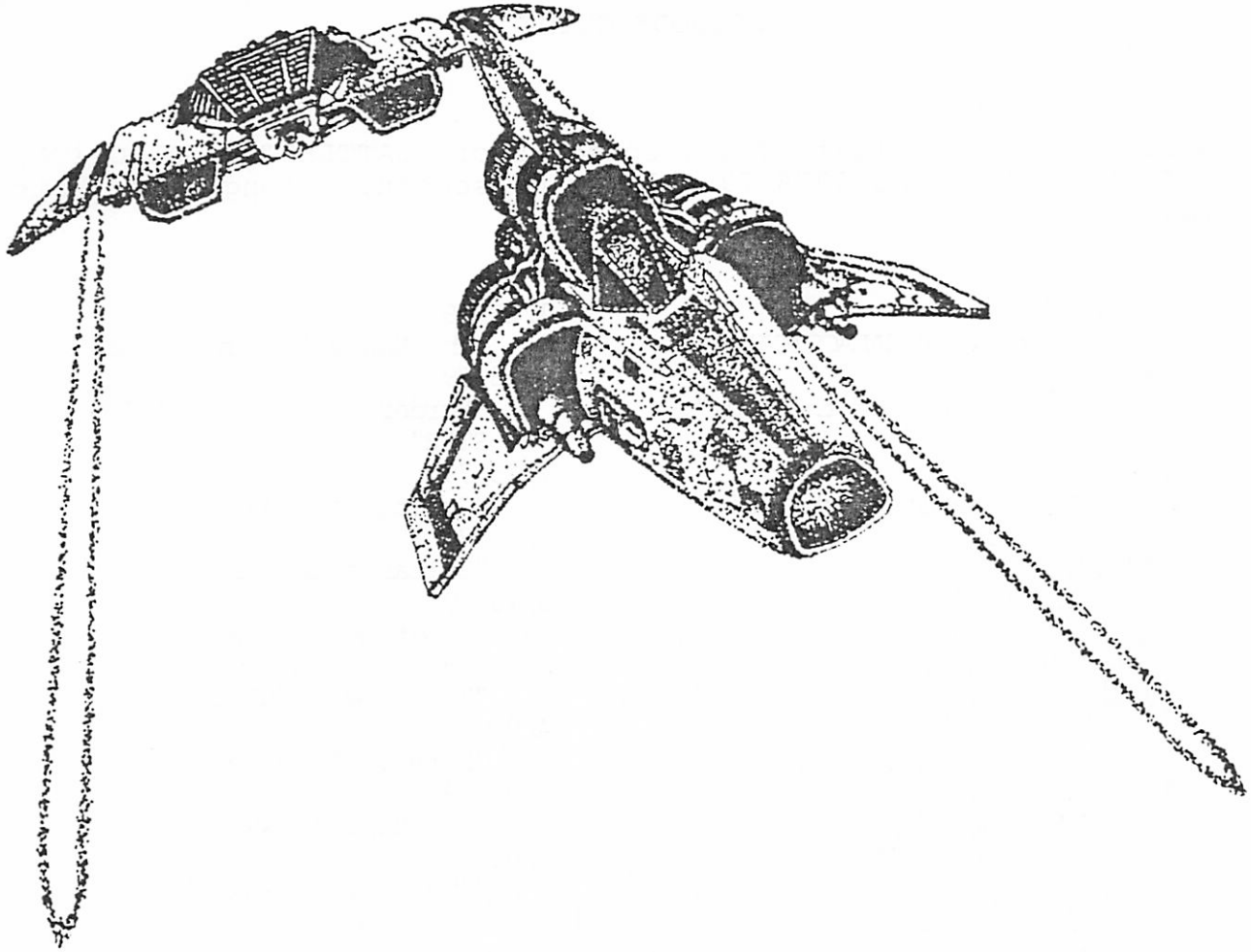
I didn't like the answer I had to give her. "We don't have the fuel."

So it went. One after another, the pilots came to me asking to get into the skies. And I had to refuse.

The newest member of our crew, Arion, picked up after the Destruction, had his own ideas of how this operation should be run. Under ordinary circumstances I would have him up on charges, but seeing how things turned out...

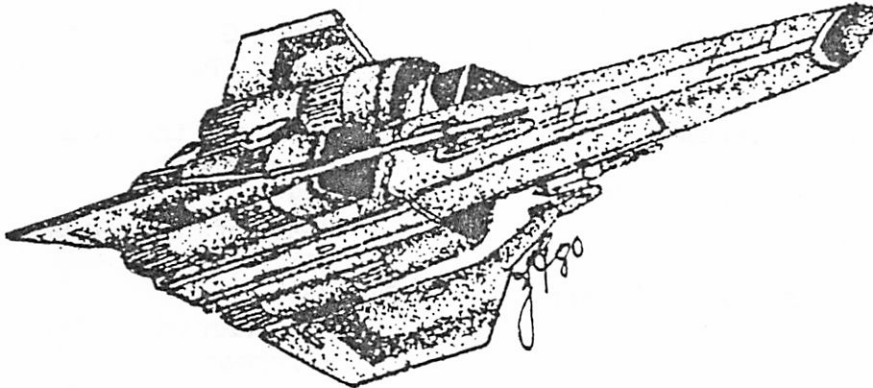
Against explicit orders, Arion took his Viper in toward the star. The Cylons were sitting on the other side, just waiting for us to come through the system. Arion spotted them, and managed to duck and run -- in the opposite direction. I will say this for him. He did use his head. He didn't lead the Cylons directly back to us.

My heart was in my throat as I listened to his reports. My pilots stood and watched me, all of their eyes begging to go to his rescue. I finally ordered my fighters up.



Somehow Arion made it back, and we now have enough fuel for full and regular patrols. We'll stay here for a few days -- barring Cylons -- to build our reserves.

Meanwhile, I intend to have a talk with a certain pilot about obeying orders...



EPISODE GUIDE

The following is a list of all episodes of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, as of the end of the 1978/79 television season, along with their broadcast dates.

9/17/78	"Battlestar GALACTICA"	1/28/79	"The Man with Nine Lives"
9/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I)	2/18/79	"Murder on the RISING STAR"
10/01/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II)	2/25/79	"Greetings from Earth"
10/08/78	"The Lost Warrior"	3/11/79	"Baltar's Escape"
10/15/78	"The Long Patrol"	3/18/79	"Experiment in Terra"
10/22/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I)	4/01/79	"Take the CELESTRA"
10/29/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II)	4/08/79	"Fire in Space" - repeat
11/12/78	"The Magnificent Warriors"	4/29/79	"The Hand of God"
11/19/78	"The Young Lords"	6/02/79	"The Living Legend" (Part I) - repeat
11/26/78	"The Living Legend" (Part I)	6/09/79	"The Living Legend" (Part II) - repeat
12/03/78	"The Living Legend" (Part II)	6/16/79	"The Young Lords" - repeat
12/17/78	"Fire in Space"	6/23/79	"The Long Patrol" - repeat
12/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat	7/07/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I) - repeat
12/31/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat	7/14/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II) - repeat
1/14/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I)	7/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat
1/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II)	7/28/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat
		8/04/79	"The Man with Nine Lives" - repeat

GALACTICA 1980

(A Review of the 3-Part Film by Judith Ann Steck)

Before I go any farther, let me say this. I LOVED IT!!! Maybe it wasn't Starbuck, Apollo, and Boomer, but I feel GALACTICA 1980 was more than adequate compensation for the loss of my beloved BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. Thank the Lords of Kobol ABC has at least a semi-open mind, and is giving Larson another chance.

Now, to get down to serious business...

No, the script wasn't too much better than any of the first half of last year's series. I agree with the general consensus about Kent (Troy) McCord -- he can't act. Apollo and Starbuck are gone (wail!). But it helps to look at the bright side of the revamping of the ragtag fleet, still fleeing from the Cylon tyranny after thirty yahrens.

Opening with an older, bewhiskered Adama announcing, "We have found Earth," almost made me cry. The scenes from the old shows -- like the shot on Kobol of Apollo, Serina, and Adama walking through the ruins -- did make me cry. Perhaps an analysis -- amateur, true -- would help clarify my thoughts on the show.

Production on the show is still first-rate, as it was with the old and is with Larson's other SF series, BUCK ROGERS. The set designs are still excellent, a blending of the "used universe" look from the George Lucas/STAR WARS universe and some of the fantasy/mythological elements seen in last year's series. The special effects -- a combination of the old stock shots done by the near-legendary John Dykstra and Industrial Light and Magic, and the not-insignificant efforts of Universal's own SFX house -- remain believable. That's what we want, isn't it? Ships that fly through space, and guns that use lasers to knock off Cylons. Things we can believe in. That aspect of the show hasn't changed. The hardware is believable.

And the cast. Did any of us really expect to see Richard Hatch and Dirk Benedict back as Apollo and Starbuck, after the second season slump last year? I hoped, but I didn't expect. What do we have now, then? Boxey's all grown up into Troy, Flight Captain of Blue Squadron. No, Kent McCord can't act -- I said it earlier -- but, gee, isn't he pretty? Boxey would've grown up to be a Warrior, just like his dad, so that's pretty continuous with last year. Troy's sidekick -- Barry Van Dyke as Dillon -- is a perfect opposite to offset McCord/Troy; he's a wisecracking, impulsive prankster who has to be Starbuck's son. Van Dyke/Dillon brings the same light touch to GALACTICA 1980 that Dirk Benedict/Starbuck brought to BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. And don't give me a line about the dark-haired/light-haired comparison -- I have a

feeling Larson and Company were hoping to sign the two from the first series, right up to the end.

To continue...

Adama's much older now, and one of the two carryovers from the old series. The paste-on beard looks silly, but other than that, it's the same old Adama (although I don't like the idea of a man one hundred or so yahrens old taking orders from a god-like adolescent, especially not Robbie Rist!!). Speaking of returning people, it was definitely a blessing to see good old Boomer back, even if he does have a blue command suit and greying hair. Maybe they'll give him a little more of a role as the series progresses.

As for the rest of the new faces...

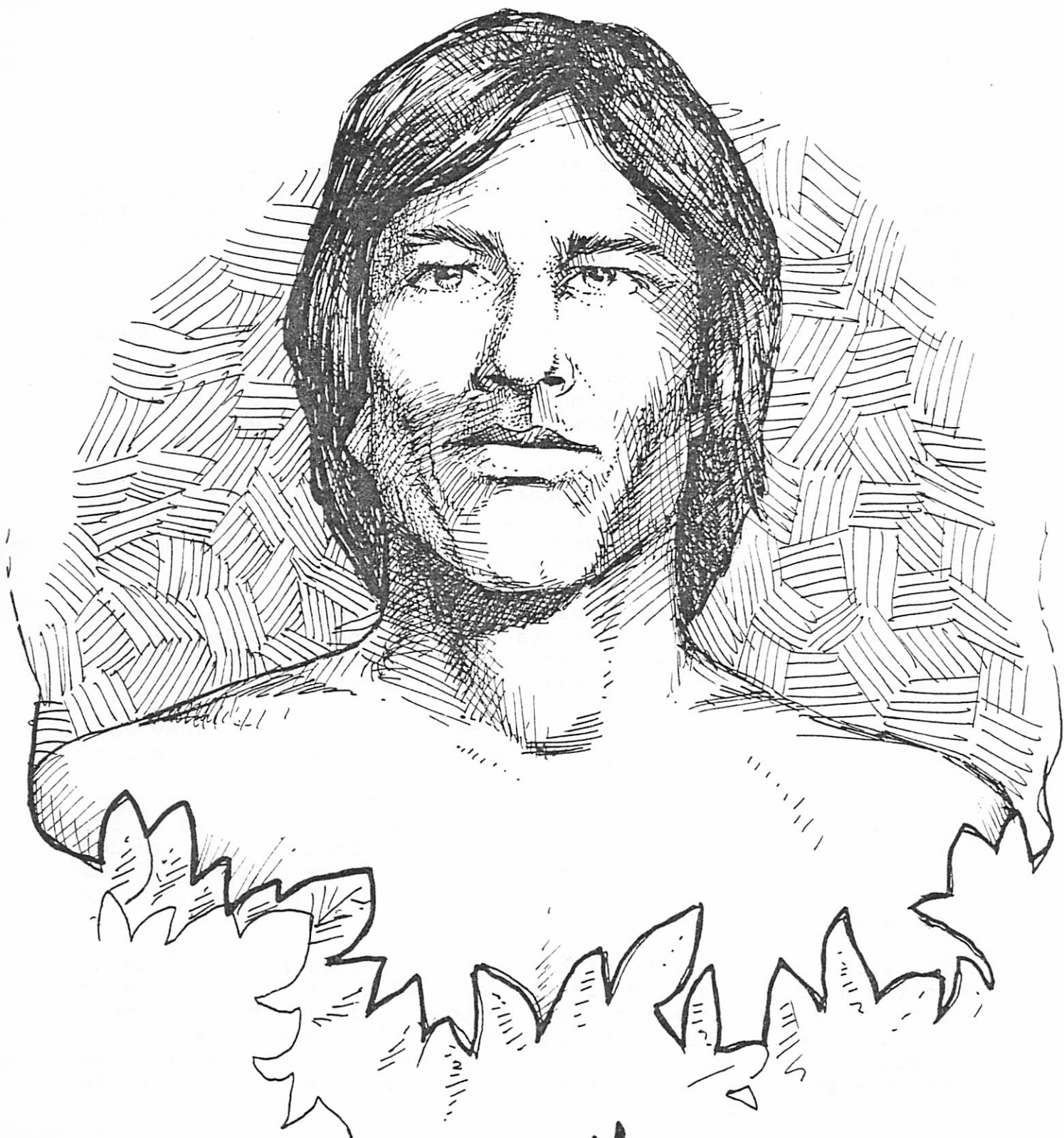
Robyn Douglass as Jaimie (I never did catch her last name!), a lady reporter (shades of Serina!) who gets caught up in Troy and Dillon's search for a friendly scientist. I like the character of Jaimie lots, because it's something for all us fantasy freaks to grab hold of -- the girl from Earth gets to go aboard the big spaceship and into the past with the two gorgeous men from outer space. Aside from that, the lady is convincing as a bewildered, though controlled, reporter who lets her curiosity get the better once too often.

I have only one thing to say about Dr. Zee -- unnecessary. Any of the GALACTICA's scientists could've come up with all those little toys he did -- not as quick, maybe, but they could've. I feel Dr. Zee is for the little kids what Jaimie is for the adolescent and postadolescent girls -- something to identify with. I really don't like him.

The story itself was interesting. I place it on the same level as "The Living Legend" from last year. Okay, so it borrowed heavily at some points from THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. But there were parts -- humorous and dramatic -- that made up for it, especially Troy and Dillon's first encounter with a telephone booth. And Xavier, that no-good S.O.B. (I don't like him -- and I hope they burned him in Salem!!), was, somehow, just perfect as antagonist for the "forces of good." The time-travel ability opens up ways to bring back any of the old crew -- they could go back in time and stop Apollo's death, for example, with relative ease.

No, I agree with most of the GALACTICA fans -- it's not the same. But I feel GALACTICA 1980 has just as much promise, and as much to offer, as last year's series, with added interest for the mundanes -- the fact that many of its stories will revolve around Earth in the year 1980.

And, believe me, the mundanes are watching it. My own father wouldn't dream of missing it.



Something Nice

By Pat Beece

HAMILTON 80

"Something Nice"

(By Pat Beese)

Apollo had escaped his fair share of Cylons, but he had no idea how he was going to escape this. The strange wedge-shaped craft seemed to come at him from every direction at once, and he couldn't imagine how they kept from running into each other. It was obviously an extremely well-planned, well-practiced attack -- and he was caught.

He sent warning messages to the GALACTICA, hoping his transmissions were not being blocked. When he finished the second message, he realized the alien vessels could easily have picked him off, but hadn't. He was being herded toward a rocky planet he'd seen on his scanner just before the other ships arrived.

As they approached the planet's atmosphere, a heavily-accented voice blared in Apollo's com, ordering him to follow a green ship down to the planet, and warning that any deviation would find him falling to the surface in very small pieces. Apollo had no choice. He followed the green ship.

They landed in the midst of desolation. No vegetation, not much of anything except rock. When his Viper stopped, Apollo sat very still, wondering what was going to happen next. If it was his ship the pirates wanted, he wasn't long for this universe.

A small army appeared out of crevices in the rock. They were heavily armed, and their appearance was discouragingly barbaric.

Apollo was ordered to open his canopy. He hesitated. It might be better to attempt to launch again -- at least he could go out in a blaze of glory. He smiled wryly as he decided that sounded entirely too much like Starbuck. He popped the canopy and was struck by a strong blast of searing wind carrying tiny bits of stinging sand.

Apollo slid down the side of his Viper. Before he could turn, something hard was jammed in the small of his back. He didn't have to see it to know it was a weapon. His laser was ripped from its holster, then both hands were pulled roughly behind him and secured. A guard (soldier? mercenary?) motioned with his weapon toward a small hill, and Apollo thought it wise to head in the indicated direction.

When he reached the base of the hill, he was surprised to see an opening. Until he was almost on top of it, it hadn't been visible. It was a relief to step out of the blazing sun, violent heat, and wind into the cavern. As his eyes adjusted to the reduced glare, Apollo was overwhelmed by the size of the place. It

could have held the GALACTICA -- with room to spare.

As he looked around, he discovered the cavern was only a part of a vast complex. Tunnels led in every direction, and through some openings he saw rooms as large as the one he was being shoved across.

Apollo was tired of walking and thoroughly lost when his captors finally stopped. A door slid back in the rough rock wall, revealing a very different atmosphere on the other side. Lush and green, the room was a veritable jungle. Plants crept down walls and hung from a trellised ceiling. Apollo could hear the sound of a waterfall, although he couldn't see it. It was as if he were looking into another world.

Pushed from behind, the Warrior stumbled through the doorway, scraping his cheek on something as big around as a tree, with a covering just as rough. Pushed again, he walked through the jungle, wishing he had a free hand to keep the vines and trailers from his face.

When his captors reached a clearing, one of them undid Apollo's fetters, then another tore his flight jacket off.

"Hey! What's going on here?" Apollo had heard of a lot of ways to make a prisoner uncomfortable, but he particularly disliked this one.

His uniform blouse quickly followed his jacket.

"Why don't you guys just tell me what you want?" Apollo didn't get an answer.

One soldier produced a knife and, while a second held Apollo's arms behind his back, slashed the buckles from the Warrior's boots. Apollo obediently kicked them off to avoid a broken back. When the guard came at him again, it was obvious what he wanted. Apollo held up a hand to stop him, removed his pants of his own accord, then peeled off his pressure suit.

He thought certainly his shorts were little enough to leave him, but his captors intended to leave him nothing. As the guard approached, Apollo backed away. He kept on backing -- until he felt something hard and cold in the small of his back again. The guard in front of him was waving the knife back and forth menacingly. Rather than let him slash with it, Apollo pulled off his shorts.

The weapon was withdrawn from Apollo's back, but the guard continued to advance, tossing the knife from hand to hand, grinning maliciously. Apollo started to back away again, not taking his eyes from the flashing blade. Suddenly he was tripped and fell backwards -- into a pool of warm, clean water. His expression when he bobbed to the surface brought a great laugh from the whole troop of barbarians.

Sputtering, spitting and coughing water, Apollo tried to shake his dripping hair from his face. He had no intention of being easy prey for the knife. To his amazement, however, the man with the knife tossed a jar at his head with such good aim that he had no choice but to catch it. The guard made scrubbing motions, then turned and disappeared into the jungle. The rest of the men followed.

After making certain he was alone, Apollo opened the jar. He wasn't at all certain what it was, despite its pleasant scent. He removed a small amount, rubbed it between his finger and thumb, and discovered it to be grainy, like sand; it also had a smooth feeling to it, as if the sand had been mixed into a lotion. The guard's scrubbing motions indicated he should wash with it, but Apollo was still reluctant. It didn't look like any soap he'd ever seen.

He wondered what Starbuck would do in a situation like this, then decided his friend would take what pleasure could be had before any ugliness began. Apollo decided to do the same. He took a great handful of the substance from the jar and began to rub himself all over. The scent was exactly to his liking, neither sweet nor heavy; it was what he would have chosen for himself. The grains made him feel clean, and the lotion made his skin feel silky. Apollo tossed the jar back to the clearing, then waded into the pool. The bottom gradually fell away, and before long it was deep enough for swimming. Realizing he hadn't had an opportunity to swim since he was a child, Apollo made some tentative strokes that quickly turned graceful as memory returned. He played in the water and would have had a thoroughly enjoyable time if he hadn't kept looking over his shoulder, watching for his captors to return.

At last deciding he'd had enough of the pool, Apollo climbed out at a spot he thought different from the one where the guards had left him. He wanted his own choice of meeting place. When he'd worked his way back to the clearing, he found it empty except for a large towel, a bowl containing oddly shaped and coloured fruit, and a clear decanter filled with a rosy liquid. He lifted one of the fruits, tossed it absently a few times, then realized he had no way of knowing if this were the same clearing or not. He'd become turned around during his swim, and the jar he'd tossed on the ground was nowhere in sight.

He dropped the fruit back into the bowl, grabbed the towel, and gave himself a brisk rubbing, then tied the cloth around his waist. Suddenly very hungry and thirsty, Apollo eyed the fruit. He wondered if it were safe to eat, then dismissed the thought. He was a prisoner, certain enough, even if this was a most unusual prison. It was unlikely anyone would go to the trouble of catching him only to poison him.

He picked up a fruit with a pale blue skin, eyed it warily, then took a large bite. It was as if all his favourite flavours had been rolled into one fruit. He finished it, then took one that

looked beige and leathery. Deciding the skin was not meant to be eaten, he pulled it off. The fruit fell into sections, and its aroma somehow had the quality of fine ambrosia.

Wiping his hands on the towel, Apollo decided it was time to learn the extent of his prison. The area around the pool was grassy, easy on his bare feet. The jungle was not. Sticks, bits of bark, plants with thorns all tore at him. He persisted, however, until he reached the vine-covered wall. There was no sign of an opening. Apollo pulled the vines away, creating a bare spot, then marked the wall with a stone. Keeping the wall at his left, he began to walk, his idea being to find a way out, or at least to determine the size of his "cell."

It had to be at least a centar before Apollo found the mark on the wall again. By the standards of any prison, his cell was huge. There'd been no opening he could find -- even the one he came through when he entered had ceased to exist. Tired, his legs a mass of scratches and cuts, his feet bruised by rocks and stubble, Apollo headed back toward the pool which had to be somewhere near the center of the jungle.

In the clearing (the same one? different?), the fruit had been replaced with pastries of some sort. The rosy liquid was now golden. There was another jar of soap, this a different colour and scent, and a blanket. Apollo took the soap, threw off his towel, and entered the pool. His legs burned and stung on contact with the water. He began to lather with the soap, and as he worked his way down his legs, found they no longer hurt. Attempting to learn if the soap was easing his hurts, he rubbed at a cut on the sole of his foot. The pain dimmed like a torch using up its fuel.

Fresh again, Apollo pulled himself out of the pool and sat down to his pastries. They weren't hot, but that didn't diminish their taste. They were filled with a mixture so finely chopped as to make the ingredients indistinguishable, but they were still delicious. The amber liquid burned at his throat. It was more powerful than any ambrosia he'd ever had, and he'd had quite a few with Starbuck at one time or another.

The thought of Starbuck turned the food to ashes in his mouth. No matter how comfortable this prison, it still kept him from everyone he loved. He had to get out of here -- and soon.

Another swallow of the liquor, and Apollo felt a soft languor slipping over him. He cursed himself for a fool, threw the decanter as far as he could, then attempted to stand, but found he couldn't. With an effort, he reached the blanket, crawled on top of it, and fell heavily asleep.

A man, balding, fat, dressed in clothes that looked as if he'd collected them from a dozen different sources, came through a crack in a rock and stood over Apollo. Certain the Warrior would give him no trouble, he made a sign, and a beautiful young woman

joined him.

She motioned to the man, and he bent over Apollo, pulling away what little covering the prisoner had. The woman nodded.

"At least this one is better than the last you brought me, Father. And did you notice, he has spirit? He searched a long time. He also shattered my decanter. But never mind. You did well this time."

"As long as you're happy, LeAn."

* * * * *

Apollo woke very slowly. His head hurt, and the light was painful. Gradually the fog cleared, and he opened his eyes long enough to look around. He sat up with a start that doubled the pounding in his head. He was no longer in his jungle prison.

This chamber wasn't large, but it was definitely lush. White carpets a hand's-breadth deep covered the stone floor. Graceful draperies softened rough walls. Candles sparkled from niches at intervals high and low all over the room, giving the walls a glow. The bed was huge and, like the walls, hung with diaphanous white curtains. The bedclothes were smooth, satiny to the touch. There was, Apollo noted ruefully, no obvious way out; the walls appeared continuous.

A light touch on his shoulder made him jump. A woman stood by the bed. With a smile, she offered Apollo the vial she held in her hand.

"If you drink this, your head will no longer hurt."

Apollo took the vial and drained its contents. Even being dead couldn't be as bad as the way he felt.

"The place for you to clean up is here." The woman walked to a blank wall. "If you touch this," she said, indicating a gem protruding from the rock, "it will give you access."

Apollo started to stand, then realized he was naked. He sank back. When the woman turned to him with a question in her eyes, he motioned for her to turn her back. Giggling, she did so. As he walked past her, she said, "You will get over this shyness, my love."

The "cleaning room" was small. A tiny waterfall ran from one wall into a pool that took up an entire end of the room. The other end held a floor-to-ceiling mirror, hung around the edges with plants; niches in the rock contained ointments, perfumes, and the Lords knew what else. Apollo ran a hand over his face, feeling two days worth (he guessed) of beard. He searched the compartments for something to remove it, but found nothing. The waterfall was meant to be a turbowash, and he made excellent use

of the warm water. When he left the pool, he found a towel that hadn't been there before. It was warm, and he realized for the first time that even the bare stone floor wasn't cold. He wrapped the towel around his waist just as the woman entered.

"I thought you might use this." She extended an irregularly-shaped crystal box filled with white powder and topped with a puff.

Apollo lifted the puff. "What for?"

"For the beard, silly." She laughed. "A beard always leaves me scratched. Allow me." She raised the puff to Apollo's face. "Don't breathe in the powder." She patted the puff across his beard, then ordered, "Under the fall to wash it off."

She snatched the towel as he turned. He would have resisted, but the powder on his face began to sting. A quick dash under the flowing water removed sting, powder, and beard. As he ran his hand over his chin, Apollo was surprised at the smoothness of his skin. He stepped from the fall into the towel held by his captor. She began to rub him down with deft strokes aimed at pleasure.

He grabbed the towel. "Who are you? What do you want with me?"

Green eyes glittered. "My name is LeAn." She moved close to Apollo, wrapping her arms around him. "And it's you I want."

Apollo's eyes registered his shock. "Me?"

LeAn danced away toward the mirror. "My father brought you to me as a present. Every so often he brings me something nice." She moved back to Apollo and began to stroke his chest. "You are very nice. Much nicer than the last."

Apollo stepped away from her. "I belong to myself."

She moved close to him again, but this time didn't touch him. Her eyes were almost on a level with his own. "Not any longer, love. You belong to me now." She didn't give his anger a chance to flare. "I will be back shortly. See that you are prepared for me." She rushed through the door into the bedchamber.

Apollo followed at her heels, but for all his speed couldn't determine where she disappeared. He sank down on the bed and attempted to think. He had to get out of here, and quickly. He got up and searched the walls for any sign of an opening, or for a gem-control like the one opening the other room. No luck. He entered the cleaning room and searched there. Nothing. He leaned against the wall in disgust.

The sound of the falls was soothing, and Apollo turned to watch the motion of the water. Seeing the splash in the pool, his eyes moved up to the opening in the rock...

Opening!

Apollo pushed off the wall and went as close as he could to the water without getting wet, staring up at the opening, measuring with his eyes. If it was possible at all, it was going to be a very tight squeeze. Looking behind the flow, he checked for hand-holds. It was just possible there were enough to enable him to reach the opening.

Hearing a sound in the other room, Apollo returned to the bed-chamber. LeAn stood in the middle of the floor, her red-gold hair flowing around her shoulders, her form evident through the filmy gown. Even Apollo had to admit she was tantalizing.

She opened her arms to him, her invitation obvious. Instead of accepting, Apollo leaned against the rock wall. She dropped her arms.

"Do I displease you?"

"You displease me very much. I told you before. I belong to myself."

Her silvery laugh tinkled. "When you have tasted my pleasures, you will be happy to be mine."

"I doubt it. I am my own."

She moved close to him, her hands stroking, making patterns, twisting his hair into curls. He didn't resist, but for all her charms, his mind was already on his escape. She drew him to the bed, pulled away his towel, and pushed his shoulders to the pillows.

A centar later, LeAn was stamping around the bedchamber in a fit of anger. "Never!" she screamed. "Never has anyone refused me!"

Apollo lay on the bed with his hands clasped beneath his head. "I told you, you displeased me."

She shrieked and stamped her foot resoundingly on the stone floor.

"However," Apollo rose slowly, languidly, "if you could be convinced to drop this business of owning me, it is conceivable," he started toward her, his warm smile convincing, "I could become very interested in someone who was my equal."

He stretched out a hand to her. Just as he was about to touch her, he deliberately hooked his foot in one of the rugs and fell heavily against the wall. The gash on his leg was nasty, and Apollo gritted his teeth. It was worth the pain if it got him what he wanted, though.

LeAn ran to him. "You've injured yourself! You must not be dam-

aged! I will bring some of the soothing-soap."

He half hoped she'd forget herself and show the way out of the chamber, but she didn't. Instead, she disappeared into the cleaning room, returning only microns later with the ointment.

"Come. I will help you to the falls. I will care for you." She bent over Apollo. Either she was really distressed, or she was an excellent actress.

"No. We're to be equals, remember? I'll take care of myself."

She sighed heavily. "You are not spirited, which is what I told my father. You are simply stubborn. Very well." She straightened. "Care for yourself."

"I'll want at least a centar to myself."

Frowning, her voice filled with condescension, she answered, "You have your centar." She disappeared into the cleaning room again.

Apollo bounced the jar of soap in his hand, grinning. Starbuck would be proud of him. He'd pulled it off so far. Now, if his leg wasn't as bad as it looked... Using the wall, he pulled himself off the floor, then gingerly tested his leg. Good. The cut was bad enough but left him fully operational.

He went to the waterfall and slathered soap over the cut. In microns, the pain diminished to almost nothing. Apollo took a large handful of the preparation and covered his chest, stomach, arms, and legs, then took another handful and covered his hips and buttocks.

"I sure hope this stuff works when you put it on before you're cut," he murmured as he eyed the wall up to the water's entrance. "I don't imagine I'll make it through that opening without a scrape or two." He rubbed his palms together, then put his hands under the water to rinse them, removing them only when he was satisfied they wouldn't slide.

Apollo took a deep breath, stepped behind the waterfall, and started to climb. It wasn't far, but the closer he got to the opening, the more he was in the cascading water. At last, his hands found the opening, and he pulled his head up to see where it led. An underground river apparently fed several openings.

He pulled himself up farther, forced his chest through, and clenched his teeth as the rocks scraped and tore at him. He found a rock firmly anchored in the water, and with one final pull, he was through.

Apollo crouched, found the remaining traces of the soap, and did what he could for his injuries. Then he took a moment to rinse himself.

"This river has to come in or go out somewhere," he whispered to himself.

He headed upstream, hoping the river came from above ground. If he didn't find a way out at the river's entrance, he would try some of the other openings. He'd just as soon not end up in somebody else's cleaning room, however. He'd had quite enough of being someone's toy. He also didn't care to run into a contingent of barbarians.

Sticking his head into any opening that showed light, Apollo discovered several more cleaning rooms. The river's cavern was becoming deeper, wider, and the flow more gentle. He took to the wall away from the lighted apertures and walked carefully as the light faded. Thinking he was about to be fully enclosed in darkness, he was delighted when he sighted a glimmer ahead. Walking was a torment; he had to feel for each step and keep a hand on the wall, feeling ahead to avoid crushing his skull. The small flicker called to him like a siren.

Apollo would have cheered when he reached the light if he wasn't sure the sound would echo and re-echo all along the river cave. The light came from a chimney -- short, relatively straight, and not too wide. He could see sky through it. He started to climb, one foot on each wall. Handholds were plentiful; but as Apollo climbed, he began to wish fervently he'd had a way to bring along a jar of that soothing-soap. His feet, back, and arms were covered with cuts, and the gash on his leg had opened again.

As he emerged from the chimney, Apollo was struck by a blast of heat, wind, and sand. He looked around carefully. There was no one in sight. The hot rock burned his feet, and particles stung his eyes. He ran to the cover of a slight overhang to rest. Feeling some of his strength return, and knowing he couldn't stay long without protection in this wasteland where sand constantly abraded the skin, he made his way back along what he hoped was the course of the river. The underground complex was tied to the water -- it had to be, for human life to exist.

Fully realizing he might never find his ship or the opening into the complex, Apollo nevertheless climbed, slid, and crawled over the burning rock, feeling his strength ebb with each drop of moisture that fell from his brow. Every micron spent on the surface of this planet was torture, and microns were achingly becoming centars. When he stopped sweating, he knew he was in real trouble. About to give up, wanting desperately to curl up in some patch of shade out of the wind and never move again, he pulled himself over one more pile of rock. There, in a depression, was his Viper.

Apollo blinked the sand from his lashes and shaded his eyes to look again. It was indeed his fighter. It appeared to be unguarded, but he remembered very clearly how that small army had appeared out of the rocks. He found a large boulder that provided both shade and cover, and sat down to watch. He didn't

have long to wait. Figures began to move from crack to crack, and before long he had a good idea where those fissures were.

His mouth dry and his eyes burning, Apollo decided not to wait any longer. He chose a fissure he'd seen only one man emerge from and made his way toward it. Knowing his skin to be very badly burned from the sun and blowing sand, he attempted to stay in the small shadows cast by rocks as much as possible. Somehow, he made it to the opening without being seen. He looked inside, but saw nothing in the darkness. Deciding to risk everything, he stepped into the entrance and flattened himself against the wall. The stone, which had not been in the sun, chilled his raw back and made him shiver.

There was no movement inside. Unlike the large cavern he'd first been taken to, this was only dimly lit. He'd somehow managed to stumble into a storage room. Apollo searched only a short time before he found a case that looked suspiciously like ambrosia. He broke open a bottle and took a long swallow, then regretfully set the bottle aside. He couldn't afford to be drunk.

He continued to search, hoping to find a weapon or clothing or a pressure suit -- frankly, anything that would help him get closer to his ship and home. For all his rummaging, the only thing he took with him when he went back to the mouth of the cave was a stout cord.

Stopping to check outside, Apollo had another stroke of luck. One of the wedge-shaped ships pulled to a stop alongside his Viper, and the pilot stayed in his line of sight until he vanished into the rock. Where there was a pilot, there was a pressure suit; and Apollo meant to have one. He carefully mapped his way to where the pilot had vanished, checking for cover and the fastest path. As soon as he'd decided on his course, he moved out, dodging and running until he reached the entrance to yet another cave.

This opening was well lit, and there were sounds inside that reminded Apollo of one of Starbuck's card games. If there were indeed several people inside, he wouldn't stand a chance. He paused, wondering what to do next.

Someone started from the inner recesses. Apollo made a large loop on the ground with his cord, retaining both ends in his hands. When the barbarian stepped into the loop, Apollo pulled up, and the soldier went down. Before the other man could regain his senses, Apollo struck him with a rock.

Feeling inside the other's clothes, Apollo felt the snug smoothness of a pressure suit. He pulled the pilot out of the lighted entrance and stripped him as rapidly as he could, then took the cord, trussed him up, and stuffed his shirt into his mouth. He wasn't far from the cave entrance, and Apollo knew it wouldn't be long before the man was found.

Pulling the pressure suit on over his burned body was a new experience in agony. Infinitesimal grains of sand became razors to slash at what was left of his skin. Painfully adjusting the last of the straps, Apollo took a final look around. Seeing no movement, he made a dash for his ship and clambered over the side, then closed the canopy and started the engines with one motion, sweeping into the sky before any barbarians could pour out of their holes in the rock.

He headed for where the GALACTICA had been when he'd left her, giving his fighter full thrusters. He wanted out of this sector as quickly as possible.

When he finally had the GALACTICA on his scanner, Apollo would have wept for joy -- if he'd been able to spare the tears. He managed a very shaky landing, and just barely climbed from his ship under his own power. He sank down at the bottom of the ramp, unable to go farther.

He wouldn't have moved again until medical help arrived, but Starbuck was bearing down on him, arms spread, ready to grab him in a bear hug and thump him on the back. Apollo forced himself to raise a hand to stop his friend's enthusiasm.

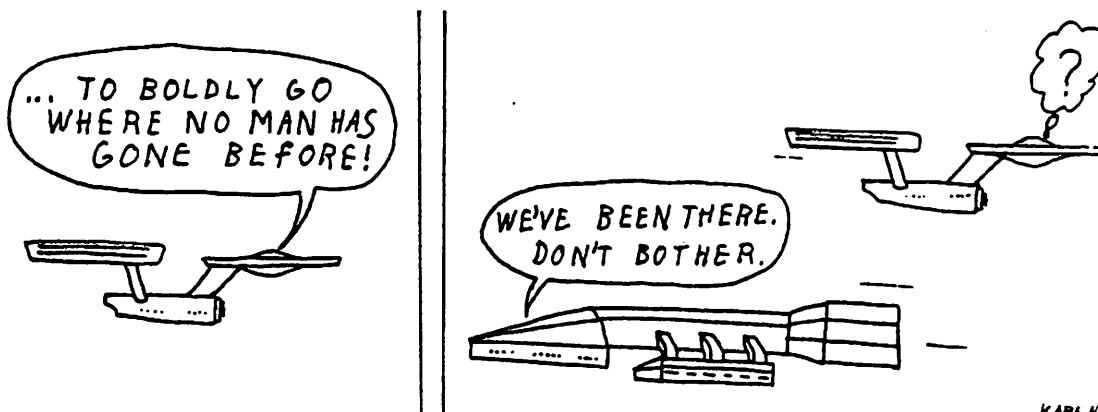
Out of his dry, raspy throat, he croaked, "Starbuck, tell them to cut this suit off me, and find me something to drink."

Starbuck skidded to a halt, just beginning to take in Apollo's condition. Genuinely shocked, he asked, "What in Hades happened to you?"

Through cracked lips, Apollo strained to say, "Well, I met this girl..."

Starbuck watched, stunned, as Apollo slumped into a heap on the deck. Exhaustion had taken over. The Lieutenant sat next to his Captain, and very gently lifted Apollo's head to his lap.

"She must have been one Hades of a girl, Apollo. But when will you learn to leave that kind to me?"



KAREN PAULI

DIANA'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice code retrieval only.)

Lyra was reminiscing about the Academy earlier tonight, and the conversation at one point turned almost inevitably to Starbuck.

Dear Starbuck! Lyra told me about one encounter she had with him shortly after she was appointed Captain Musca's teaching aide. I think she realized even then that Starbuck would not have made a pass at her just to get information on an electronics exam. He may have been trying to get information -- but whatever else was going on in his delightfully devious mind, he must have been attracted to her, too. I know Starbuck, and that's how he operates.

Lyra couldn't remember the names of his two companions and "fellow troublemakers," as she jokingly called them. I couldn't help laughing, although I wasn't about to explain why. I remember -- I have good reason to. After all, I spent a lot of my free time as a cadet in their company, until they graduated and left Caprica. They've all been back several times since, of course, but I haven't seen any of them since long before the OSIRIS left the Colonies.

I suppose that's the real reason I couldn't get to sleep tonight. I have so many memories -- happy memories -- of those times. Lyra knows some of them, but not even she knows all of what took place. After all, no cadet is going to confide everything to a member of the teaching staff!

Like the time Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer (There! I've named them all -- three men I've loved dearly for as long as I've known them!) taught a certain instructor a lesson for trying to teach them a lesson. Or the way they arranged to "steal" the main Academy computer for...

No matter. I remember a great many things, but most of all I remember the last time I saw all three of them together. And the last time I saw Apollo alone...

There are some pictures I keep in a locked drawer along with my commission, most of my personal papers, and the awards I've been given. Every now and then I take one of them out, just to remind myself that it all really happened. Not that I'd ever forget, or want to. But it seems so unreal, a fantasy, not an actual event.

Apollo is smiling in that picture, something he's always done far too rarely. The smile was for me, as was the message he wrote on



the back of the picture.

I still remember what he said that day. It was a little over a sector before my graduation, and he'd been home on furlon. But he couldn't stay; the GALACTICA was leaving on another lengthy mission, and the Commander wouldn't have been overly understanding if Apollo (of all people!) had been late getting back. Or if I were the reason for his being late.

We knew we might never see each other again.

"Remember, Diana. No matter what happens, no matter what the Lords put between us, we'll always have the past. And the future -- however far off it may be. We've been too close, and loved too deeply, for our love to end. Ever."

We were close, and had been for a very long time. There would be other loves for both of us -- but I believed his words, even as he did. Had it been Starbuck...

But Apollo never could lie, at least not to me, even when we were children. He meant what he said. And I've always been willing to share his love. We talked about it often enough, fully aware we both might eventually find others we would care for, aware we might even be sealed to others some day. But not even that could ever diminish what we would always share...

I've tried to lock those days away somewhere in my memory, but I've never been able to do it. When we learned of the destruction of our home worlds, when I knew they must all be dead, I wanted to die, too. But I've a feeling -- and I know I've said this before -- that somewhere...

* * * * *

I have said it before. I was afraid to even speak his name then, but not any longer. I know somehow he must still be alive...

The Commander always said that his children were a bit psychic -- and that I was, too. And, by all the Lords of Kobol, if it's true, if Apollo's still alive...

* * * * *

I've been thinking a lot about Apollo lately. I'm afraid Lyra's noticed -- she thinks I'm depressed. But I'm not, really. Just, well, a bit preoccupied.

Apollo's been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. When we were children, growing up together, we used to team up to outwit our parents. The Commander never caught on, but Ila always knew. Mothers seem to, somehow. Or so Lyra's told me.

Ila was a wonderful mother, for all her odd political views. She and the Commander used to argue a great deal. But she was always just, always impartial toward the four of us. I remember countless times when I thought her unfair because Apollo, who was nearly two yahrens older than I, was allowed to do things forbidden to me and the younger children. And poor Zac -- being the youngest, he had to wait longest for the freedom he wanted.

Apollo and Zac were always very close, for all the difference in their ages. They would disappear together for centars at a time, never telling Athena or me what they were up to. And they usually defended one another in the inevitable family quarrels. I know Zac cried for days when Apollo left for the Academy.

For as long as I can remember, my brothers both wanted to be Warriors. Apollo achieved his goal. Zac may well have done so, too -- although now and then I still find myself thinking of him as a child. He'd be furious if he knew...

Athena, too, went to the Academy. We all wanted to be like our father, like the Commander. He was always someone very special. I've never known anyone quite like him -- even Apollo. We all loved him, trusted him, respected him, practically worshipped him -- but as far as I know, none of us was ever afraid of him.

Adama and Ila adopted me when I was only four yahrens old. They always treated me as their own daughter -- and I think I love them more for that than for anything else. They gave me a home, a family, an identity I might never have had otherwise.

Most of all, they gave me Apollo. I keep coming back to him, like steel drawn to a magnet. Adama and Ila both knew of our love. If it surprised or upset them, they never showed it. Instead, they gave us their blessings. And I loved them all the more for that.

At times, I've regretted that I wasn't really their daughter, that my real parents were dead. But my love for Apollo, and his for me, have made me rejoice that I was adopted. Otherwise, what we've shared might never have been...

I've never told Lyra who my parents -- sorry, my foster parents -- are. I think I'm a little afraid to. I remember Apollo telling me how much trouble he had when he first met Starbuck and Boomer, all because of who he was -- or more correctly, who his father was. Not that it would matter to Lyra. But I've never told her anyway.

I've tried to remember just when it was that I first realized I was in love with Apollo, and I honestly don't think it was until I went to the Academy myself. I'd gotten used to his being away, just as Zac did, and I hadn't even seen him in over a yahren. I missed him terribly, of course, but so did Zac, and Athena, and Ila. I never really thought about it much until I saw him again.

I suppose Apollo must have realized he loved me about the same time I realized I loved him. We talked about it once and laughed over our nearly identical reactions.

It seems we both thought the same thing -- that loving one another was wrong somehow. And we were both miserable because of it. I don't know how Apollo managed to overcome his feelings of guilt. In fact, I don't know for sure how I did it. But, trite as it sounds, a day came -- or rather, a night...

I remember that first night, and all the many that followed. Boomer had been helping me with some of my electronics work. It was quite late when we were done, and he still had some work of his own to finish. So Apollo offered to see me back to my quarters.

It was a miserable night, cold and wet. By the time we reached my quarters, we were both thoroughly drenched. I invited Apollo in to dry out a bit before returning home.

He stood by the window for a long time, silently watching the rain. I was worried. He looked pale, and he was far too quiet; he seemed very preoccupied. I knew better than to ask what was troubling him. Instead, I went to stand beside him.

Neither of us said a word. We just stood there, side by side, looking out at the rain. After a time, it seemed perfectly natural for Apollo to put his arm around my shoulders. I leaned against him, his warmth driving out the chill I felt even indoors.

Suddenly he seemed to realize how close we were, and moved away.

"Diana, I..." He broke off, then shook his head. "I'm sorry," he whispered.

"Sorry? Why?" There was a torment in his eyes that matched what

was in my heart. I wasn't really aware of what I said, wasn't even aware of walking toward him. But I must have, because suddenly I was in his arms. And when he kissed me, he most definitely was not kissing his sister...

For nearly a sector, all poor Starbuck knew was that Apollo had a girl; he didn't know who. When he finally found out... Well, Hades must be pleasant in comparison.

Starbuck teased Apollo until he had the answer he wanted, only I imagine he didn't really want what he got. He was stunned, horrified, shocked, appalled. Furious, too. He came to my quarters and raged at me -- something about incest and unnatural love. Which it wasn't, of course, since Apollo and I weren't really brother and sister at all. But that didn't matter to Starbuck. I'm afraid I lost my temper and threw things at him. Fortunately, my aim was off...

He raged at Apollo, too. And Apollo just laughed at him, which was probably the best thing he could have done. Starbuck was so surprised he finally shut up long enough to start thinking. Then he disappeared for nearly a section. When we saw him again, he seemed as happy for us as we were.

And we were happy, blissfully so, until Apollo received his commission and was assigned to the GALACTICA.

That last section was the stuff of fantasy. We were together every centon of the time, and I can still feel his arms around me, his mouth on mine, his warmth and strength. And when our section was over, when he had to leave, I almost couldn't let him go. I'd have gone with him, but the Commander would never have forgiven either of us. He could and did accept our love -- in fact, he seemed delighted by it -- but he'd never have forgiven such a breach of military discipline. And because we both loved him dearly, we did what we had to do.

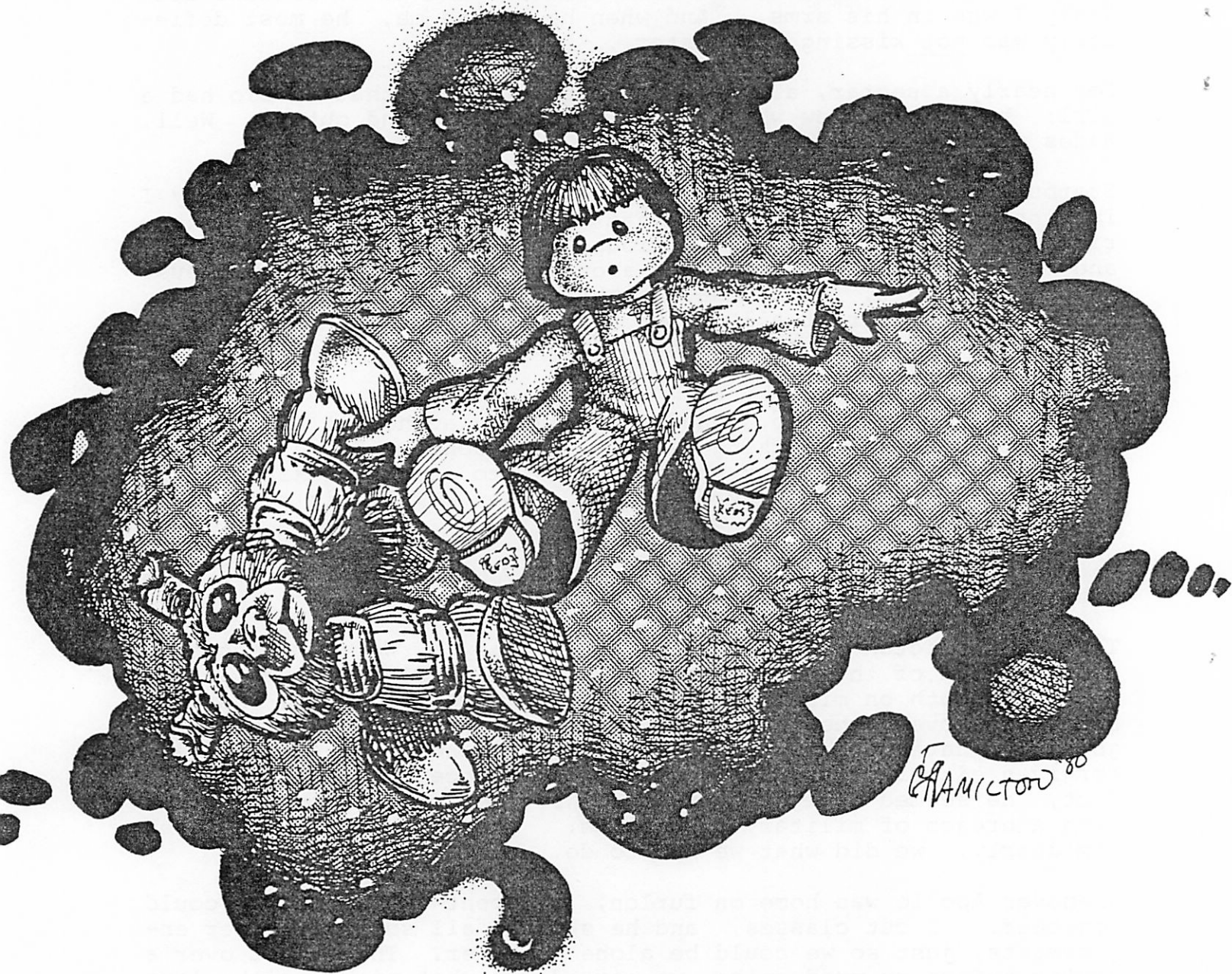
Whenever Apollo was home on furlon, we spent what time we could together. I cut classes, and he skipped all sorts of other engagements, just so we could be alone together. Then, just over a sector before my graduation, we parted for what might be the last time...

I remember the Commander telling us one night that, whatever lay ahead for us, we would always, at least in part, belong to one another. That there was a kind of psychic bond between us that would endure as long as we lived. I found the idea odd at the time; but I've given it a lot of thought lately, and I've come to believe he was right. Apollo is so much alive in my thoughts, in my heart...

I know he's alive. I do know. The bond between us is so strong I would have felt his death, and a part of me would have died with him. And we'll find each other again some day. That, too, I know. I don't know how -- but I know.

GET THE KID

PLAN #576



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VOID HIM!**

AND HIS LITTLE DAGGIT TOO!

CONTEST!

CONTEST!

CONTEST!

CONTEST!

CONTEST!

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Please??

COMING SOON: Our all-new LOCK ATHENA INTO A CLOSET Contest!!

"The Decision"

(By Bennett E. Snyder)

"Core Control to Cylon fighter. Stand by to launch for defensive training."

Athena warmed up the twin-engine craft while Sheba checked readouts and weapon charges. Adama felt it would be useful for the cadets to practice combat techniques by using the fighter as a target, and this would be their first practice flight.

"We're ready whenever you are. I just hope Cree and his trainees remember to keep their fingers off the trigger," Athena stated. "I'd hate to become an ionized cloud."

Sheba grinned. "We're ready here, Core Control. Just say the word."

Omega spoke into his pickup. "Launch trainees and Raider." The bridge monitors picked up four Vipers leaving the launch tubes, and the Cylon craft leaving the landing bay.

Cree took lead position in the formation. He'd become a fairly good pilot and might some day make squadron commander. He led the group away from the GALACTICA, then separated from the Raider.

Since the GALACTICA's destruction of a Cylon base star, the Fleet had enjoyed a few sections of peace. They were in unknown space on their way toward Earth. What they didn't know was the area they were traversing was inhabited by interstellar pirates, descendants of the expedition ages earlier that had left Kobol. Some of the ships of that ancient Fleet had been unable to keep up with the rest; their crews had become the ancestors of a pirate culture.

"Sheba, I've got something on my scanner, and it's not you. At least forty targets." Cree sounded a little worried, since the only other ships that should have been in space were those of Red Squadron -- and Red Squadron hadn't yet launched for their patrol.

Colonel Tigh immediately ordered battle stations. Red and Blue Squadrons started their Vipers, waiting for the launch order. Sheba, ranking officer of the cadet flight, was the closest to the pirates. "Cree! Form up on my wing. These cadets are about to get the real thing!"

Apollo and Starbuck immediately headed for the unit. "Sheba, get your group out of there! Those pilots are too inexperienced!"

"Can't hear you, Apollo. Besides, someone has to hold them until you get here."

Athena banked left toward an attacking craft while Sheba fired the lasers. A ball of gas appeared in place of the pirate. Cree and the cadets were getting in their licks as well, with four enemy ships vanishing before them. Two

fighters tried to get behind the Cylon craft but were set upon by Apollo and Starbuck, who promptly sent them to oblivion.

Red and Blue Squadrons were decimating the group, but the pirates were determined to get through. Three reached the RISING STAR and began firing on her. Boomer, Jolly, and Greenbean went after them. The liner was damaged in an upper passenger area, but the three pirates paid for their daring, joining those who had become space clouds.

The other pirates were finally beaten off, and the Vipers returned to the GALACTICA. Green Squadron was launched to provide a defensive screen.

A med-shuttle left the RISING STAR and headed for the GALACTICA. No one was killed in the pirate attack, but several people suffered decompression, with one life in particular hanging in the balance.

Cassiopeia went looking for Starbuck the moment she recognized Chameleon. She found Apollo in Blue Squadron's quarters and learned Starbuck was in the Officers' Club.

Apollo noticed her worried look. "What's wrong, Cassiopeia?"

"You remember Chameleon, the man Starbuck believed was his father?"

Apollo nodded.

"Well, we said the tests proved it wasn't true, but that was Chameleon's idea. He really is Starbuck's father. He didn't want his son to leave the Fleet. They've spent a lot of time together since then, and now Chameleon's been badly hurt. I'm afraid of what this will do to Starbuck."

"I see," Apollo said thoughtfully. Being from Caprica, he knew what Starbuck would go through. If it were found Chameleon couldn't survive without an artificial lung implant, he might not want to live. Capricans had a strong dislike for androids, believing there was no substitute for human effort. It extended to artificial limbs. Science hadn't yet reached a point where lost limbs could be regenerated, and cyborgs were looked down upon. Apollo believed the old laws might no longer apply, since the Colonies no longer existed; but who knew what the Council of Twelve would legislate? At least the GALACTICA was immune to such prejudice. Viper pilots felt a strong bond with the machines that kept them alive in space, and they could understand someone who needed artificial support to survive.

"Let's find him, then, before he drinks himself under a table. He's still smarting over a cadet accidentally firing on him."

When they arrived in the Officers' Club, Starbuck was talking to some of the other pilots. He spotted Apollo and Cassiopeia and went over to them, a grin on his face. It quickly faded to a worried frown when he heard the news.

The three quickly went to Life Center. What Apollo feared was confirmed.

Chameleon's condition had worsened. The only reason he was alive was an artificial lung, which provided him with oxygen.

Starbuck slowly approached the support chamber where Chameleon lay. Dr. Paye glanced up after examining the lifeline connections. "Go ahead, son. He's still conscious. The sedative I gave him won't take effect for a few microns. We'll get out of the way for a while. Come on, you two." He led Apollo and Cassiopeia out the door.

"He... Hello, Starbuck. It's nice to see you. I'd get up, but I can't seem to move." He gave a pained grin as Starbuck pulled up a chair. "I guess Cassiopeia told you the truth about those test results."

Starbuck nodded silently. It wasn't fair, having his father taken from him just as he knew he still had a father...

"They want me to decide about artificial lungs and things like that. I'd like you to decide for me, Starbuck."

Starbuck nodded again, wishing these events were a nightmare from which he could wake up.

"We didn't really get to spend a lot of time together, did we, son? I enjoyed the times we spent at the..." Chameleon's eyes slowly closed, and his breathing became shallow.

Starbuck rubbed a hand over the viewing glass. At least Chameleon was sleeping peacefully. Now comes the hard part, he thought. If the old laws are still in effect...

* * * * *

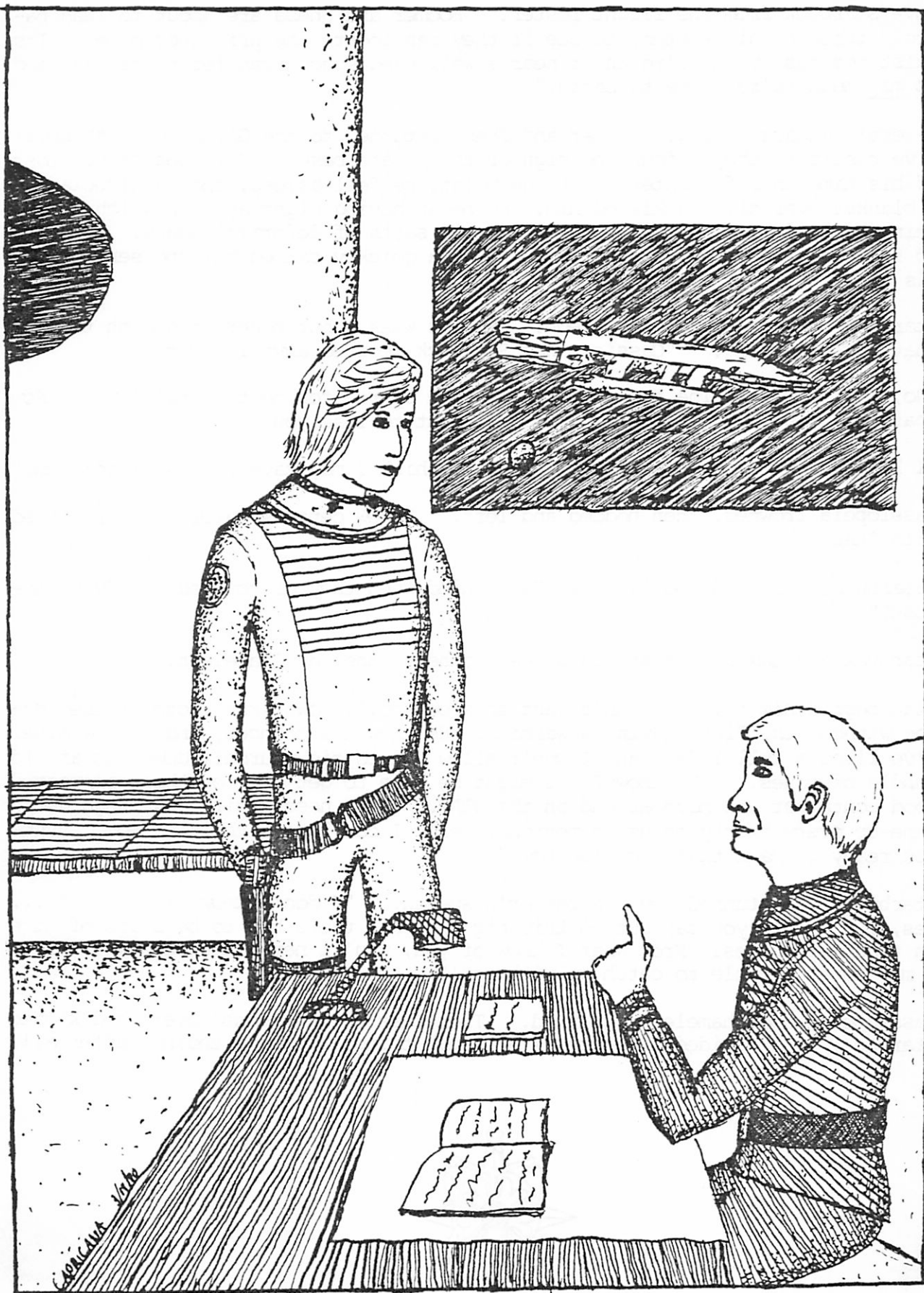
"Colonel, we must stay on the alert until we are clear of this sector. I will not allow any more damage to this Fleet. The damage to the RISING STAR..." The buzzer at Adama's door interrupted him. "Enter."

An obviously upset Starbuck came through the door. Adama motioned him to a seat. "I'm sorry about Chameleon. If there is anything I can do to help, just ask."

"Commander, do the laws about cyborgs still apply now that the Colonies are gone? I'm afraid of the decision I have to make if they do. Condemning my father to euthanasia would be like shooting him in the back. I..." He broke off.

"Starbuck, I know what you're going through. When Tigh and I were pilots, we saw men who brought their ships back but were missing arms or legs, were blind, or had half their faces destroyed. Some coped as they were. Some left Caprica for surgery elsewhere, to become cyborgs. Others committed suicide. The effect on their families was terrible. As far as I know, the laws no longer apply; we have need of cyborgs now. But even without the laws, yours is a difficult decision, Starbuck." Adama thought for a moment, then added, "As of now, you are on emergency furlon. I do not want to see you on the bridge or in the launch bay. You are to spend your time with your father. Do you understand me?"

Starbuck suddenly brightened. "Yes, sir!" He practically ran from Adama's quarters.



Tigh turned to Adama, a look of relief on his face. "I'll tell Apollo to remove Starbuck from the flight roster. Boomer and Sheba are about to lead patrols through this system, to see if they can locate the privateer base. Its existence must mean we're in or near a well-used space transfer route -- and it may mean we're close to Earth."

Several centars passed. Boomer and Sheba returned to the GALACTICA with negative results; they'd found no sign of the pirate base. Starbuck spent most of his time in Life Center. At one point, he fell asleep, and Cassiopeia put a blanket over him and kissed him. He began having nightmares in which he was being pursued by pirates, Cylons, and all sorts of deformed humans. He woke up in a cold sweat, screaming. Cassiopeia quickly calmed him and sent him to his own quarters.

Starbuck's shout roused Chameleon. He was weak, but coherent enough to know what was happening. "Cassie, has Starbuck decided anything yet?"

"No, he hasn't. The two of you have been apart for most of his life. Now that he knows you're alive, he doesn't want to lose you."

"I know. Could you get him back here? I think I may have an answer for him."

Cassiopeia frowned, then nodded and left. A few centons later, she returned with Starbuck.

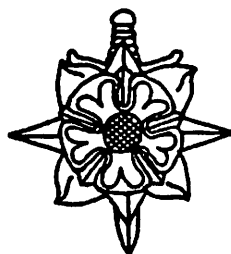
"Starbuck, why did Apollo leave Zac behind when they discovered the Cylon ambush?"

Starbuck and Cassiopeia stared at each other, then at Chameleon.

"Zac begged him to. He didn't want to slow Apollo down, risk both of them dying without the Fleet having a warning. He knew his chances, and I know mine. I've lived a full life, and I won't allow you to tie yourself down to an old bundle of bones. Who knows? I might be able to get out of this compressed food container and move around on the STAR. If I need artificial lungs and a tune-up every twenty thousand metrons, well, I can live with it. So... Are you ready to make that decision now?"

Starbuck was stunned by his father's speech. "I don't know what to say... Yes, I do! If you can put up this big a fight, there has to be a lot of life in those old bones. From what I know of you, you'll never tie me down. Frak! I may never be able to catch up with you!"

Cassiopeia and Chameleon grinned. Then Cassiopeia leaned over and kissed Starbuck, who decided maybe there are such things as happy endings after all.



Colonel Lyra's Log

(Personal and Confidential)

Last night Diana reminded me of someone I haven't thought about in a long time -- that brash cadet, Starbuck. What a scoundrel he was! He managed to take mayhem with him wherever he went.

And what a ladies' man! I saw women old enough to be his grandmother swoon at his smile. He could charm (pardon the expression) the pants off any woman at the Academy, and he used that ability to his advantage on more than one occasion.

I'll never forget the day he made a pass at me. If his timing had been just a little different, I might not be sitting at this console now. I was sorely tempted to give in.

At that stage of my life, the furthest thing from my mind was an involvement of any kind with the male gender. I was too close to my personal tragedy for that. I must have radiated that message loudly, because in all the time I spent at the Academy, the only male ever to show any interest in me was Starbuck.

The interest was not actually for my person, however, but for the position I held. I was aide to the electronics professor with the most miserable reputation for being pompous, malicious, and arbitrary. He was. The only good thing I can say about the man is he knew his business.

It seems Starbuck and his two cohorts -- both names escape me at the moment -- had managed to get into trouble with Musca over some minute infraction of the rules. There was a major exam coming up on Viper electrical systems. No pilot worth his salt would fail that one.

I was not privy to the actual exam questions, but I was most knowledgeable about a great many things related to the exam; for example, what books Musca had out, what kinds of reports I'd had to file, what topics of conversation had passed between Musca and other instructors, what kinds of things he'd asked me to check specifics on. In general, what areas the man's mind was on.

Starbuck showed up at my desk one afternoon asking for tutoring. I asked him in what areas he wanted help. With only the vaguest of answers, he perched himself on the corner of my desk. An awful lot of general conversation started to flow, and I found myself laughing and feeling better than I had in some time.

Starbuck began to close in, and I suppose with any other woman his strategy would have worked. Even I found myself drifting toward him, wanting to believe all the felgercarb he was spouting. Two things stood in my way. One was the likeness of my husband on my desk, and the second was a nagging suspicion of what he was really after.

I found myself beginning to weaken in spite of everything, so I stood and began to dig in some drawers, ostensibly to find some materials to use in tutoring. Starbuck came and stood behind me, and managed to get rather fresh with one hand. I whirled, and found myself looking over his shoulder at Musca coming down the hall with the blackest of scowls on his face.

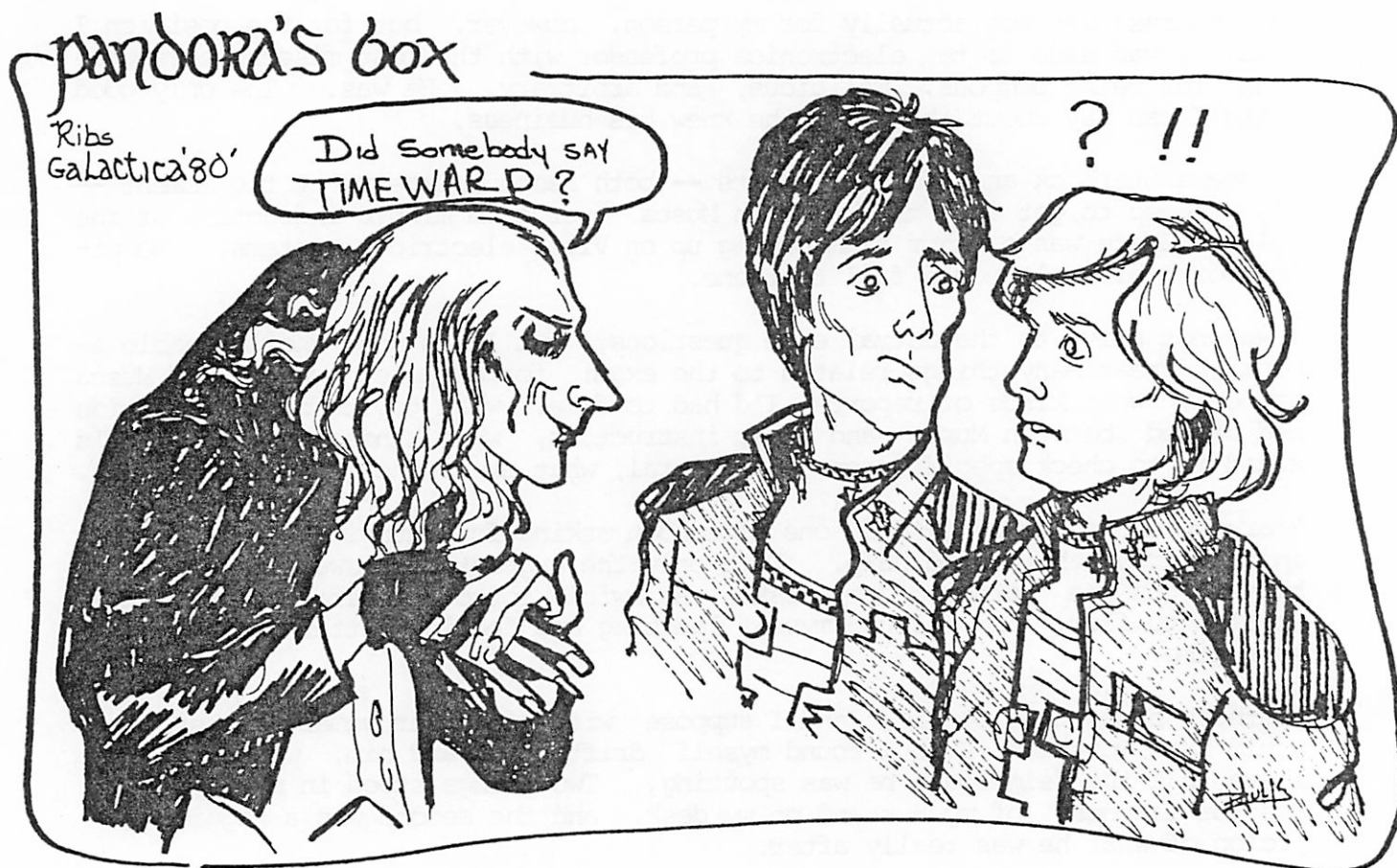
I don't know exactly what was said when Musca dragged Starbuck into his office and closed the door, but I do know Starbuck took off down the hall as if someone were firing a laser at him when the door finally opened.

Only one time did Musca evidence any kindness toward me. After Starbuck fled, he came to my desk and asked if I were all right.

"The very idea!" he shouted. "And you outrank him, too!"

That last remark did it. I broke out in a rash of giggles. Trying not to let the man know he was still being a pompous ass, I covered my mouth with a handkerchief and gave in to a raucous fit of coughing.

If he deserved his reputation, Starbuck was one hot pilot. I hope he made it through the Cylons.



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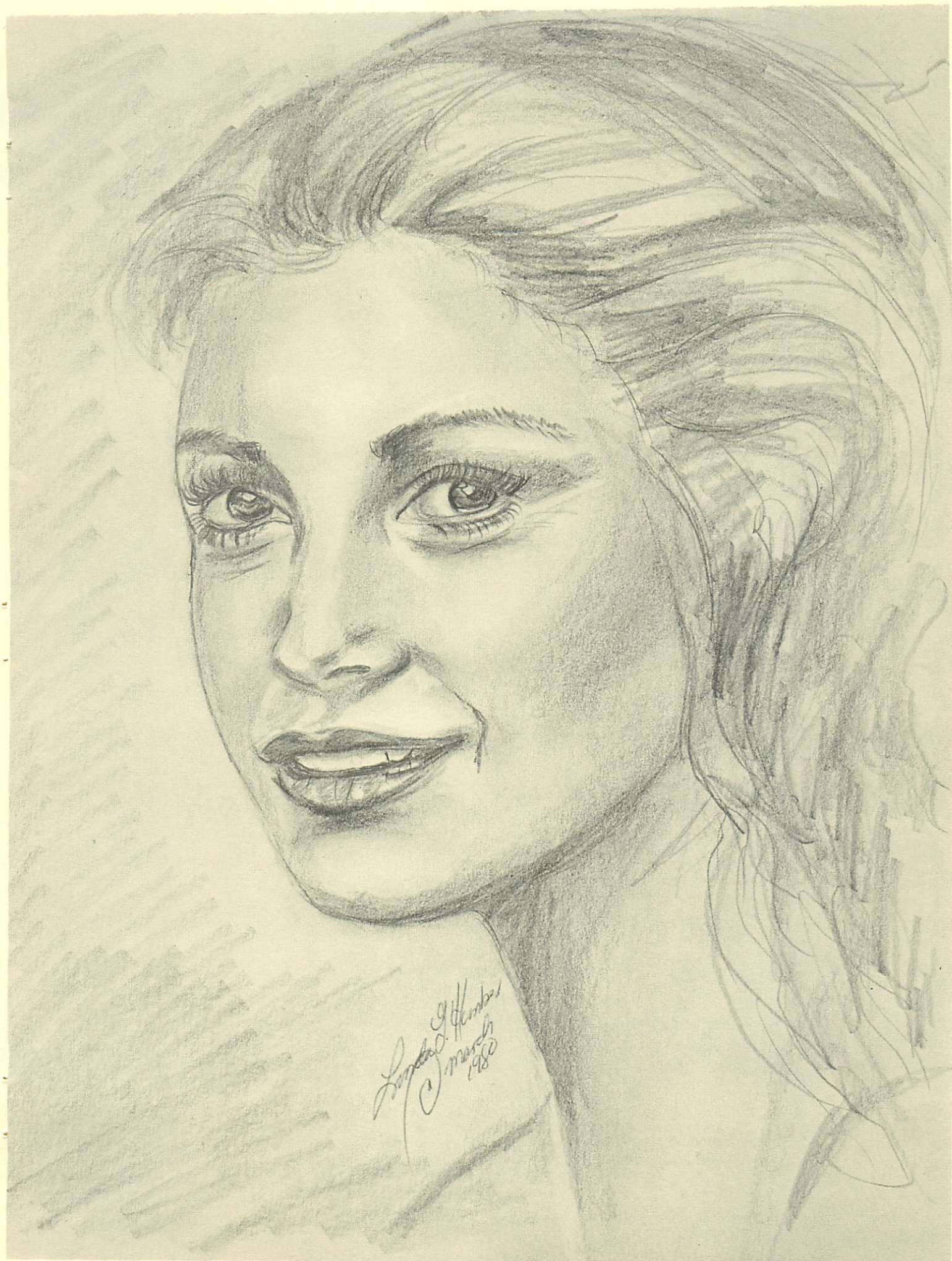
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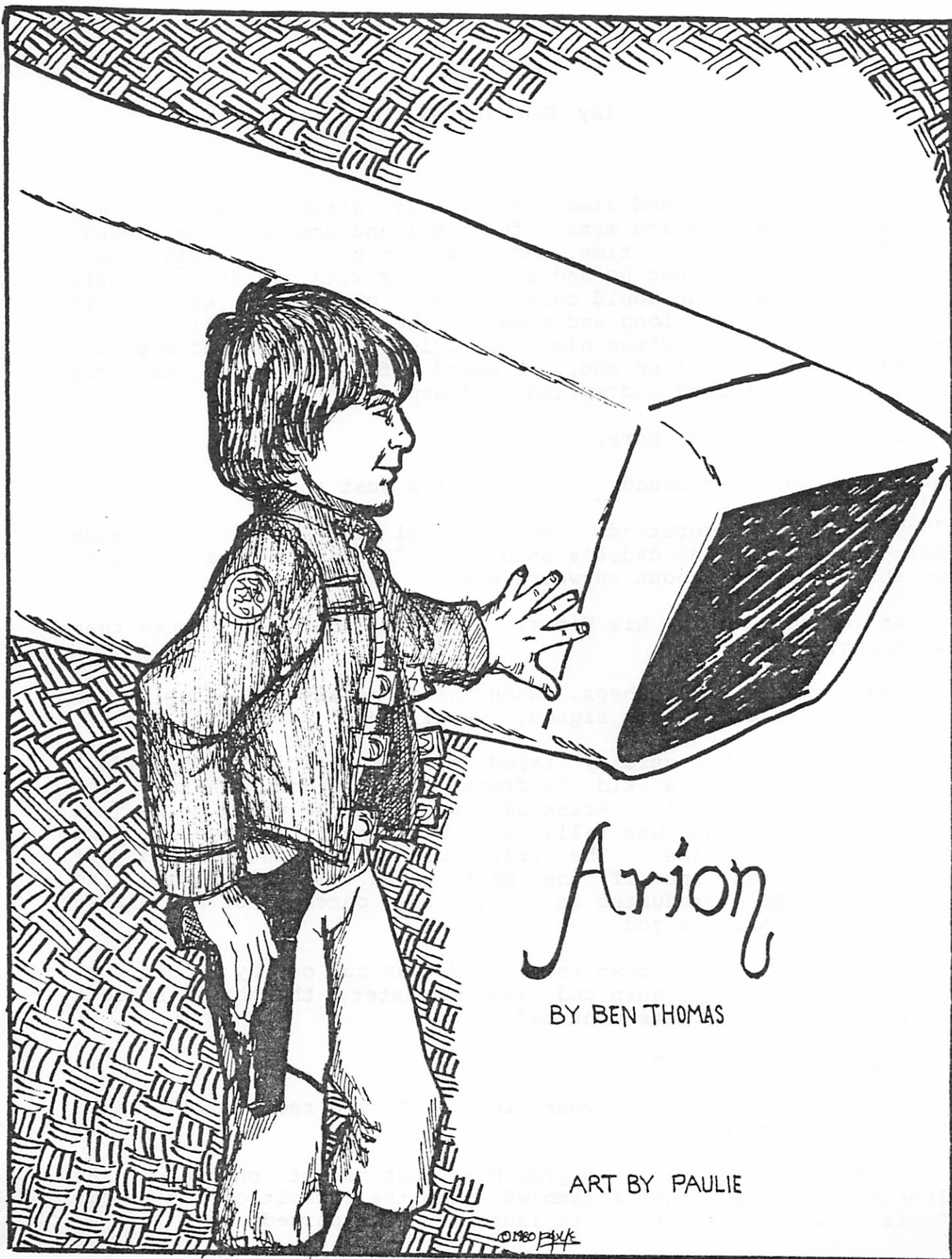
"Purple and Orange?" is pleased to continue our collection of BATTLE-STAR GALACTICA portraits by artist Linda George-Himber.

These portraits are being presented in a format suitable for framing. They can be removed from this issue of "Purple and Orange?" without affecting the integrity of the publication.









Arion

BY BEN THOMAS

ART BY PAULIE

"Arion"

(By Ben Thomas)

Arion reached out and almost reverently stroked the flying machine. The grey-white metal felt cool and smooth. He sighed, stood back for the nth time, and looked at his Viper. His Viper! It didn't matter that he had to share her with two fellow cadets -- she was his. He would care for her, clean her, keep her in tip-top condition. Long and sleek -- she was beautiful! It was with her that he'd gotten his first Cylon. Sarpedon had been impressed. And as if on cue, he heard a familiar voice call his name. Arion turned and smiled. "Sarpedon!"

"I knew I'd find you here."

Arion looked embarrassed. "I... It's just that..."

"Hey, hey, I understand. We all feel it, Arion." Sarpedon placed a hand on the cadet's shoulder. "I think I'd rather be in my ship than just about anywhere else."

Arion looked back at his Viper. "I want to fly her more than anything!"

Sarpedon smiled. "Perhaps. When things really get going, after the treaty is officially signed, we'll see."

Arion blushed, but quickly tried to look official. He didn't want to look like a kid in front of Sarpedon. After all, Sarpedon was his idol. Arion did everything he could to be just like him. Sarpedon was tall, with black hair and eyes so dark they were black holes. The girls couldn't keep their hands off of him. He was one of the best triad players aboard the COLUMBIA. He'd graduated in the top five percent of his class. Sarpedon was Arion's god.

"Hey, Arion, let's go down to..." He was cut off by a deep rumble somewhere in the ship and, microns later, the shrill screech of alarms. The lights went red.

"Sarpedon! What...?"

"Don't know, but get in your Viper. It's a red alert!" With that, Sarpedon was gone.

Arion reached out as if to grab him, but caught only air. He looked both ways, then scrambled into the cockpit of his Viper. "This is Gold Nine, ready to launch," he reported.

The voice at the other end sounded funny. But why? "Section

Eleven, Launch Bay Beta. Stand by to launch fighter."

"Standing by."

"Core systems transferring control to fighter craft. Launch when ready."

"Launching," he responded, taking one last look at the bay. The other pilots were just starting to arrive. Arion sighed, engaged his Viper's turbos, and streaked down the launch tube. Then he was out of the COLUMBIA -- and right in the midst of an invasion. "By the Lords of Kobol!" he gasped.

What he was witnessing was the beginning of the end. The Colonial Vipers were hopelessly outnumbered by the raiding Cylons. Off to his right, he could see Cylon fighters swarming over the battlestar ATLANTIA. "By the Lords!" he gasped again. His hands flashed out and grabbed the joystick, and in microns, he was surging toward the helpless ATLANTIA.

The ATLANTIA! The Quorum of the Twelve was on that battlestar! And President Adar! The representatives of all the Colonies! If the Cylons destroyed... His thoughts were interrupted by a great flash. A new star existed for a centon, then faded. The battlestar ATLANTIA was no more.

He felt numb. How? How could this be happening? This was the peace armistice, the end of the Thousand Yahren War. How could this battle be going on? How could the President, the Quorum, all the representatives be gone? Too many questions.

Then a voice screamed into his cockpit. "Arion, look alive! You've got a Cylon up your tail pipe!" It was Sarpedon.

"What? Where?"

A red flash appeared briefly behind his Viper. "Nothing to worry about now. I got him."

"Thanks!"

"Don't mention it. Now pay attention. Here come some more!"

The ATLANTIA was gone, thought Arion. But one ship's destruction does not a victory make. A fire of vengeance filled his eyes. He turned his Viper and headed after Sarpedon, right toward an incoming squadron of Cylon Raiders. With his attack computer, he brought a Raider into range and fired a laser volley. The enemy fighter vanished. Arion smiled and swung his ship around for another go.

It was then he noticed the battlestar GALACTICA pulling out of the battle. "Lords, the GALACTICA! She's running!" Then there was a flash, and a tremendous shudder passed through his Viper. "Oh, no!" he muttered. "I've been hit! I wasn't paying atten-

tion. I've been hit! What will Sarpedon think?" He calmed. Think like a Warrior!

He checked over the systems readouts. Damn! Starboard engine out. Heavy damage to high engine. Can't fly like that. Have to get her back to the COLUMBIA. He could almost feel the pain of his Viper. It's okay. I'll get you to safety. Then he noticed the Cylon that had hit him was still coming. Oh, no! What could he do? He couldn't out-run the Cylon in this shape. Suddenly, the pursuer disappeared in a shower of debris.

"Saved your can again, Arion!" said a disembodied voice.

"Thanks again, Sarpedon," he said to his guardian angel. "I'll return the favour."

"Right now, you just get that ship back to the COLUMBIA."

"On my way!" He steered the Viper, as best as he could under the circumstances, back toward the battlestar, the huge vessel he considered home. Changing frequency, he called into the pickup, "This is Gold Nine, requesting assistance."

A voice answered, "Reading you, Gold Nine. How can we help?"

"Heavy damage. Have to land."

There was a short pause, then, "Gold Nine, you are cleared for emergency landing in Alpha Bay. Do you need assistance?"

"No, no, I think I can make it. Here I come." The port landing bay zoomed up, growing from a small bright hole to a huge maw. But even so, it was going to be tricky. Somehow he managed to level the Viper. Then, at the last micron, Arion heard Sarpedon's garbled voice. He was in trouble. He pulled his Viper around and headed back to his stricken friend. "I'm coming, Sarpedon! Hold on just a centon longer!"

He ignored the voice from the COLUMBIA screaming for attention and closed in on his friend. He tried to fire a laser volley at Sarpedon's attacker, but just then his high engine blew out. He was cast into a wild tumble, and the laser bolts missed completely. The Cylons didn't. The last words he heard from his friend were, "Sorry, Arion. It looks like I lost this one." With that, Sarpedon and his Viper were gone.

"Oh, my God! Sarpedon!" There was a rushing in his ears, as if he were passing down a launch tube. His sight grew blurred and fuzzy. He began to mutter, "Sar... Sar... Sar... pe... don. Sar... pe... don..."

And then, before Arion could hope to accept Sarpedon's death, the COLUMBIA erupted a huge stream of flame, and microns later exploded into a giant fireball. The COLUMBIA disappeared.

The rushing became a roar, as if a huge wave was rising up and then crashing over him. The stars blotted out, the cockpit disappeared. His body froze. Blackness flooded everything.

The Viper continued its tumble, passing out of the massacre and into deep space.

* * * * *

Arion woke in a place so dark that at first he thought he was dead. But, no, he was breathing, and he could feel cold metal beneath him. Then he realized he was naked. Where in Hades was he? He shifted about, reaching out with one hand, not leaving the spot he awoke in. He didn't feel anything. Perhaps if he reached out with a leg...

His thoughts were interrupted by a burst of light behind him. He spun and gasped. Standing before him, in a circle of light, was an IL series Cylon. Emotions and memories surged through him. Images in slow motion -- the ATLANTIA, the COLUMBIA, the GALACTICA running, Sarpedon's Viper exploding. Pure hatred and rage blotted out the memories. That was a Cylon. Cylons killed Sarpedon...

He launched himself from the cold floor at the glass and metal demon before him. He was stopped short by blinding agony. A force field. He crumpled into a heap on the floor.

"I am truly sorry about that, but I'm sure you understand. One must protect one's self. Let me introduce myself. I am Asmodeus, Commander of this base star. And you?"

Arion clenched his teeth; his fingers clawed at the deck. He said nothing.

"Oh, please, let's not be stubborn. You can give me a name!"

"It will be a cold day in Hades..."

"Must we rip it from you? I only want the answers to a few questions. This is not an interrogation."

Arion shut his eyes tightly and let out a long breath. Why not? If he was ever going to get out of here, he had to stall for time. He looked up at the almost smiling creature. Rage filled him again, but he checked it. "Arion."

"Arion. Now, that wasn't hard, was it? Rank?"

Distrust filled him. "Cadet."

"Cadet Arion. I don't know humans well, but I thought you were young. Cadet Arion of the battlestar...?"

So what? She was gone. Why not tell him? "COLUMBIA."

"Oh."

Arion was confused. Just "oh?" That's all?

"I was hoping you were from the GALACTICA."

"GALACTICA! Hades, no! I'm not from that ship of yellow runners!"

Asmodeus cocked his head, almost human-like. "Runners...? You don't know, do you?"

"Know what?"

"The battlestar GALACTICA escaped."

"Of course. She ran."

"But only because it left the battle and tried to save your planet, Caprica."

"Try... Tried to save Cap..."

"Yes. It failed, of course. We destroyed all the Colonies."

"Taura?"

"Your home world?" When the human didn't answer, Asmodeus continued. "Yes, the planet Taura is gone."

Not only Sarpedon and the Fleet, and the Quorum, but his family, his friends. Perseus!

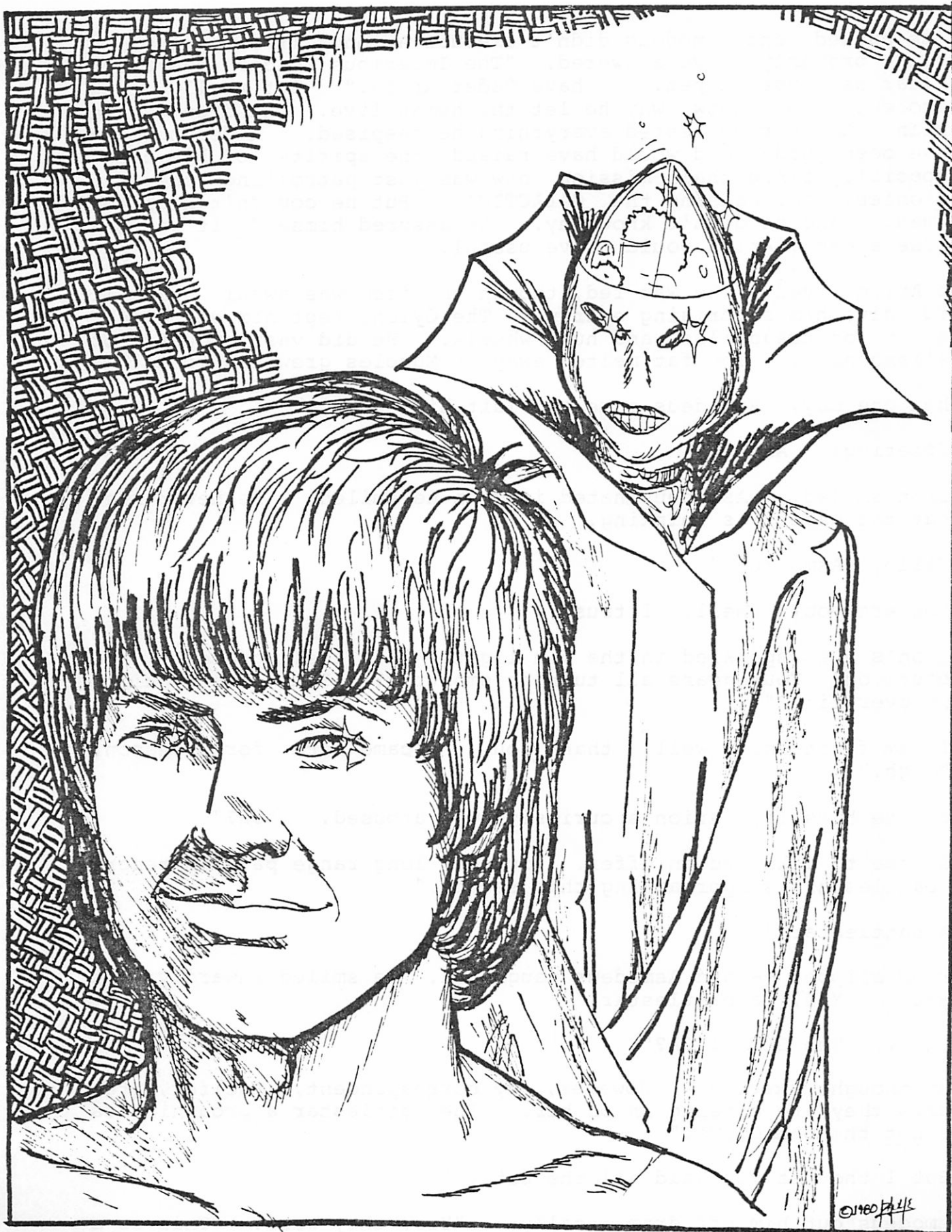
"But," the voice somehow cut through the fog of Arion's shock, "the GALACTICA managed to assemble a fleet of survivors. It, and its small fleet, escaped."

And with that, Arion survived. With life turned to something darker than his cell, there was now a spark of hope. Something to escape for -- something to live for! His mouth clenched, then twisted into a strange smile. He looked up at Asmodeus, his eyes filled with a dangerous fire.

Asmodeus saw the difference in the cadet immediately. If he could have gasped, he would have done so. He had said something he shouldn't have, he thought. He didn't know these humans well. He must put himself in control again, or this human might get out of hand. There was no telling how dangerous they could get. "Well," he said, "it's clear you no longer serve any purpose for us. I will consider your fate."

As Asmodeus turned and disappeared, the light went off, leaving Arion in darkness. But he wasn't in the dark. Not any longer. Arion laughed.

* * * * *



Time passed, and Asmodeus didn't execute Arion. If asked why, he would probably have answered, "The Imperious Leader has Count Baltar as a useful pet. I have Cadet Arion." But really, even Asmodeus didn't know why he let the human live. He didn't like Arion. Arion represented everything he despised. A death would have been good, and would have raised the spirits of his crew. Especially since their mission now was just patrolling the dead Colonies, not chasing the GALACTICA. But he couldn't kill the human. And he didn't know why. He assured himself it was because someday Arion would prove useful.

So Arion lived. He was fed, though the food was awful. But it did give him surprising energy. The Cylons kept him exercised. He ran on treadmills and huge wheels. He did vast amounts of calisthenics. The fat melted away. Muscles grew and toned.

Then one day, Asmodeus came to visit him.

"Greetings, Arion."

Arion smiled. Asmodeus hated it when he smiled. He never knew what the cadet was thinking.

"Hello, Asmodeus."

"How are you? Well, I trust."

Arion's eyes sparkled in the dim light. "I'm feeling great. How about you? Your gears all turning smoothly? Your turbos kicking over fine?"

"I am functioning well, thank you. I came here for a reason, though."

Despite himself, Arion's curiosity was aroused. "Oh?"

"I came to make you an offer. You see, long range patrols report a battlestar is approaching this sector."

"A battlestar?"

Arion slipped -- and Asmodeus caught it. He smiled inwardly. At last! "Yes, a battlestar."

"The... The GALACTICA?"

"My thought exactly. However, my correspondent, Lucifer, reports they are closing in on her. The battlestar approaching us is not the GALACTICA."

"But I thought you said all the bat..."

Asmodeus cut him off dramatically. "Yes, they were. This is a new one. Which brings me to my offer -- full officership aboard this base star, executive officer guaranteed within a yahren.

Perhaps even your own command. Plus any, uh, female survivors I can dredge up. Proper food. And, of course, full pay."

"For... For what?"

It was the first time Asmodeus had heard Arion stutter since he'd met him. At last! "I want that battlestar. You will launch your repaired Viper and lead the ship into the area. Tell them it's safe. Get a celebration going or something. You have a devious mind. Then we will destroy the battlestar. You survive, gain a position. I go down in history. We are all happy."

Arion was lost. A surviving battlestar, besides the GALACTICA. The SOLARIA, the... And the Cylons wanted his help. He would be a king. He hated the Cylons, but...

Arion nodded.

"Good, good. Your uniform will be brought to you immediately. Then you will be taken to your Viper." The human was useful. And if he should be accidentally killed in the ensuing battle, well, some tragedies come in every war.

* * * * *

A centar later he was in space, his Viper in his hands, functioning smoothly. Streaking through the stars -- his lady.

Ahead of him was the battlestar. It was already on his scanner. Behind, he knew, were hundreds of Cylon Raiders, ready to launch. He reached out shakily and activated the com. "This... This is Cadet Arion of the battlestar COLUMBIA, calling... Calling... My Lord! Is that a battlestar?"

There was a short pause and crackly silence. Then a muffled, distrusting voice filled the cockpit. "Unidentified object, repeat transmission, please. Immediately -- or face destruction."

He was startled. He waited a micron before he could speak. "Ca... Cadet Arion of the battlestar COLUMBIA." A sob raked through him. "Who is this?"

The voice replied, "This is Purple Squadron Leader, battlestar OSIRIS."

"The bat... Battlestar OSIRIS! But the OSIRIS was lost!"

Suddenly three Vipers came into view, then flashed by. "No, Cadet, we're not lost. The COLUMBIA...?"

"Destroyed!" Another sob escaped him.

There was a respectful silence. "Any Cylons in the area, Cadet?"

Arion fought life itself. And then he saw the battlestar. "Oh,

my... I..."

"Cadet, are you all right?"

"I... It's... It's a Cylon trap! Launch your Vipers!"

Centons later, he was surrounded by battle. The peace armistice, he thought. It's not really a peace armistice. It's a Cylon trap. Where's the ATLANTIA? Has she been destroyed? Is that the COLUMBIA?

There was an explosion behind him. "I just saved your can," came a woman's voice.

"Sarpedon?" he asked.

"No, this is Flight Commander Lyra. Is this Cadet Arion?"

"Where's Sarpedon?" he screamed. "Where is Sarpedon? We have to save Sarpedon!"

There was a rustling sound. A long pause, then, "This is Sarpedon, Arion."

"Sarpedon?"

"Yep, it's me. You got some damage?"

"Yes, my high engine. My starboard engine's out."

"Okay, then, buddy. Here we go. We're going to land in Alpha Bay. You okay?"

"I'm okay, Sarpedon."

"Ready?"

"Ready. The COLUMBIA! She's all right! She's not destroyed!"

"That's right, Arion. Now, follow me."

The landing bay zoomed up, closer and closer. Then they were inside. But Arion's landing skids weren't down. He hit the deck, bounced, and went sliding. The Viper smashed into the far side of the bay, and Arion's head slammed into the canopy.

There were people all around him. And a woman. She was saying something; he couldn't tell what. Then he was being lifted down and was on a stretcher. Her face was still there. She looked worried. Then she disappeared. Everything went black.

* * * * *

"It can't be!" Asmodeus screamed.

"It is true. The human warned the OSIRIS," said a centurion.

"That is its name? OSIRIS?"

"Correct."

"I want it destroyed."

"With the human's warning, the OSIRIS was prepared. The Vipers keep coming fresh."

"Damn!"

"Sir?"

Asmodeus turned to the centurion. "What?"

The centurion decided not to pursue what his commander had said. "We are taking heavy losses."

"Then withdraw!"

"Sir?"

"Withdraw! Stop questioning me! Withdraw!"

The centurion turned and walked away. His was not to question why...

Asmodeus fumed. Arion had rubbed off on him. He was acting just like a human! The human betrayed him! Escaped! Escaped him! What if Imperious Leader found out? He wouldn't. The Leader wouldn't even know there was an OSIRIS. But Asmodeus would find her again. And destroy her! And destroy Arion!

* * * * *

This time Arion awoke to light. Bright white lights. "Sarpedon?" he whispered.

"No, Arion. Not Sarpedon."

He looked up to see a woman's face. She was holding his hand. It was the woman he'd seen in the landing bay.

"Sarpedon's dead, isn't he?" He didn't need an answer. It was a statement, not a question. "Who are you?"

"My name is Lyra."

"Lyra."

"He's okay?" someone behind Lyra asked.

Lyra looked over her shoulder. "Yes, Diana. I think so."



A second face appeared. They were both beautiful.

"The COLUMBIA's gone. This is the... The OSIRIS," Arion said quietly.

"Yes."

"I thought the OSIRIS was lost."

"It looks like we are," replied Diana.

Lyra sighed. "We just got back from our deep space mission, to find that everything, everyone's gone."

Arion looked up. "No."

"'No?' What do you mean?" demanded Lyra.

"The GALACTICA survived."

"The GALACTICA!" Diana gasped.

"Arion," said Lyra, "what do you mean? Are you sure?"

"Yes. The GALACTICA escaped. And a small fleet of survivors."

"Diana! Get this information to the Commander!" Diana turned and ran from the room. "Do you know where they went, Arion?" Lyra asked.

"No," he said, a sudden drop in his voice. "I don't." A tear ran down his face. Lyra reached out and lightly wiped the tear away.

"That's all right, Arion. You saved us, and you've given us some valuable information." She touched his cheek and whispered, "Now rest, Arion. Rest. You're safe now. Everything's all right."

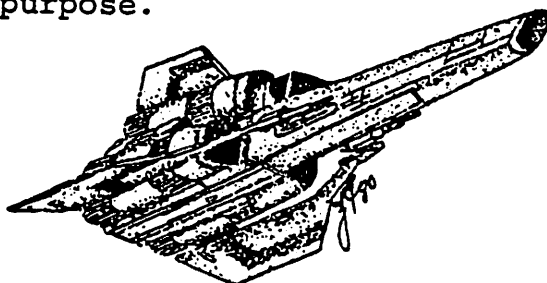
"Maybe my family is alive in the GALACTICA's fleet. Or yours."

Lyra smiled weakly. "Maybe."

Then he was asleep.

Lyra rose, shrugged off the memories he'd dredged up. Someone she'd known might have grown up to be just like him. She turned and started for the bridge.

The OSIRIS now had a purpose.



Colonel Lyra's Log
(Personal and Confidential)

Starbuck! Ever since Diana started me thinking about the Academy, he's been everywhere! It is incomprehensible to me that a man I've met only a handful of times should suddenly take over my consciousness the way he has -- but he has.

Last night someone was asking about Aldebaran -- and there was Starbuck again. At least that connection was logical; a lot of the others haven't been.

The ATLANTIA and GALACTICA moved out on maneuvers together. It was an absolutely dreadful three sections. Drill, after drill, after drill, and nothing to relieve the boredom -- until the Cylons. It was really only a small group of them, but the ATLANTIA squadrons got to them first, and they weren't about to let the GALACTICA pilots forget it.

Several of the GALACTICA's pilots were invited to the ATLANTIA's Officers' Club so that our men could gloat. I wasn't interested in that kind of thing, and so avoided it. However, Aldebaran had the schedules with him, so I went looking for him in the most logical place -- the Officers' Club. There, large as life, was Starbuck.

I think when he first saw me he wanted to run -- probably because I last saw him when he was running. He stood his ground, however, and as much to aggravate Aldebaran as anything else, I greeted Starbuck like an old friend. It was fun to watch Aldebaran sputter; he seemed to take perverse delight in acting as if he owned me.

I took the schedules from Aldebaran, and watched his face as I invited Starbuck for a drink -- in my quarters. Aldebaran had never made it that far.

One drink turned into several...

The rest of the maneuvers were just as dull as the first part, but we had been promised shore leave when they were over. About three centars before we were to be turned loose, Starbuck showed up waving two shuttle ducats. He'd made reservations at the fanciest gambling chancery on the planet, and he was looking for a "good luck charm." I accepted his invitation.

It was delightful. It would have been an absolutely perfect idyll -- except Aldebaran showed up. Starbuck and I were in the casino; he was winning enough cubits to pay for our little jaunt. Aldebaran had been drinking. (To be fair, it was the first and

only time I saw him in his cups.) He began yelling at Starbuck for stealing "his woman." I was scared stiff; they were both armed. Starbuck, somehow, simply smiled at Aldebaran and invited him for a drink. Somehow, the two of them ended up at a table together. The first moment Aldebaran was distracted, Starbuck sent me off to our room.

I spent the next centar pacing the floor, really expecting to have one of them end up dead. At long last Starbuck stood in the doorway, grinned, and said he and Aldebaran had parted the best of friends. I didn't know whether to hug him -- or shoot him.

The rest of our leave was perfect. Starbuck is an excellent -- um -- conversationalist, and we did a lot of -- ah -- talking. It was over much too soon.

I could have cried when we had to board separate shuttles, but somehow I didn't. I knew he wouldn't like it. I started to say good-bye, but he stopped me with a kiss. "I never say 'good-bye.' It's too final," he said.

I really feel thick between the ears. All of that happened yahrens ago, and I'm just now beginning to put the pieces together. Starbuck and I really did do a lot of talking during that leave, and I learned a lot about how he felt about his two buddies. They've got to be incredibly special men; I know Starbuck is.

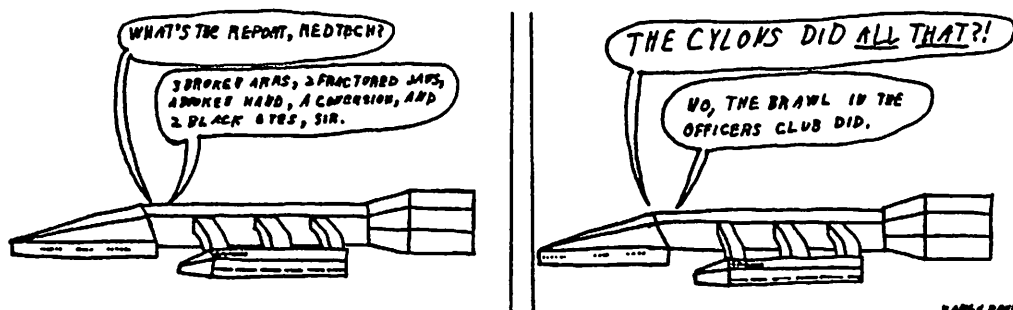
I never say much (out loud, anyway) about Starbuck to Diana anymore. She always seems to know exactly what I'm talking about, has one more story to tell, and then sits back with that damn secret little smile of hers.

She knows him, all right, and she knows him well -- very well.

That first time I found Diana crying by the river, the only thing she could talk about was that wonderful, perfect brother of hers. Since then, she won't talk about her family at all. I know Starbuck isn't Diana's brother, but I'd put money on the idea that one of his buddies is. I won't ask her, though. If she wants me to know, she'll tell me.

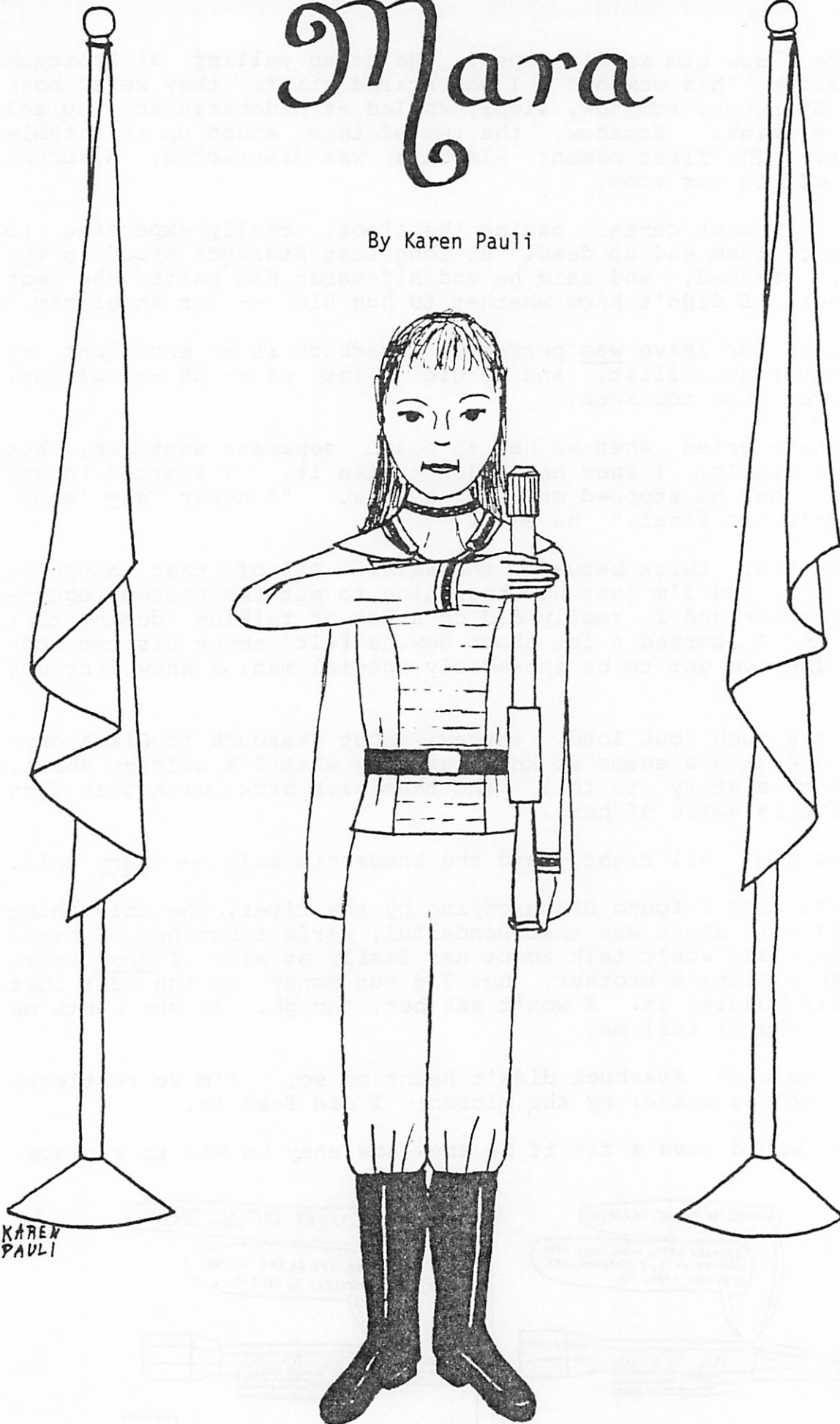
I really do wish Starbuck didn't haunt me so. I'm so restless, and I'm getting meaner by the micron; I can feel it.

Aldebaran would have a fit if he knew how easy he was to replace.



Mara

By Karen Pauli



"Mara"

(By Karen Pauli)

As all my records were destroyed by the Cylons, I've been asked to record all I can remember for the data banks.

I was born at the main medical center in Caprica City, but raised in my parents' home in the country. My parents felt children needed fresh air and space to run; the city was too confining. I had a brother, Davos, who was five yahrens older than I and my only playmate. My father died when I was too young to remember him clearly. A Cylon raid destroyed the place where he worked, and he was one of the casualties. Mother had been a dancer with the Caprican Cultural Centre, so she taught dance once or twice a section in the city. Between this and Widows' and Orphans' Assistance, we managed quite well. She tried making a dancer out of me, but while I had coordination and rhythm, I was far from graceful. My brother raised me, almost more so than Mother, so I tended more toward boys' games and activities.

My brother applied to and was accepted at the Caprican Military Academy. I stayed home with Mother and rode the shuttle to the Learning Center each day. I missed his companionship greatly. When I was thirteen, Davos unexpectedly showed up at the Learning Center in the middle of the day. There had been another Cylon raid, which I thought was just another take-cover drill. It wasn't. Davos had come to tell me the Cylons had scored a direct hit on our house. Mother was dead. The full meaning of this didn't sink in until a few days later, when I saw what was left of the house. Even at the memorial service, I just sat there thinking, "It must be someone else." Our relationship in later yahrens had been more like sisters than a mother and daughter, and I always felt she died just as I was finally getting to know her.

Davos became my guardian. But since he was attending the Academy and couldn't look after me, Orphans' Assistance placed me in a Learning Center Student Boarding Home. Davos came to see me whenever he could. He showed me all around the Academy, and once we even snuck a ride in a double-seat training fighter. I remember the incident vividly. I loved the sensation of flight, the feeling of freedom. I think that's what convinced me to enter the Academy. I'd been thinking about it for quite a while -- but after that flight, there was no doubt in my mind. I was going to be a pilot!

Tagging along after a brother five yahrens older meant I often had a bit of a struggle to keep up and to do everything he did. But I had a lot of determination. People used to call me "Davos' Shadow." This determination was to set my course in later yahrens.

Scholastically, I was not as talented as Davos, so I had to work hard to live up to his example. I didn't have any close friends or go out with boys because I was too busy studying. The only time I stopped was when Davos came by. Sometimes he would find one of the cadets at the Academy who would go out with me, and I would find one of the dorm girls who fancied my dashing cadet brother, and the four of us would go dancing. That is, they would dance,

while Davos and I sat and talked flying. He would tell me all about the maneuvers he'd learned, describing them in detail. That was far more fun than dancing.

I got my civilian shuttle pilot's license just as soon as I was old enough. I would sometimes borrow a shuttle from one of the other students or use the Learning Center's to "run an errand" and go for a long flight. Sometimes I'd even try some of the maneuvers Davos told me about, though there's a world of difference between a private civilian shuttle and a fighter. Still, I had no trouble passing Flight Theory at the Academy.

Davos graduated and was posted to the battlestar ATLANTIA by the time I enrolled as a cadet. Even though I worked hard to equal his record, I was only an average student. Except for piloting, which I seemed to have a talent for.

We were all encouraged to join an activity. I wasn't big or strong enough for triad; my voice wasn't good enough for a chorus; and I wasn't graceful enough for the gymnastics team. I couldn't join the Precision Flight Squad until my third term, so I tried out for the ceremonial drill team. I made it first try. Maybe Mother's dance lessons helped. I made the Elite Drill Squad my second term; most don't make it until their third or fourth. Davos came home on furlon once and got to see me perform. I'm glad he did, because shortly afterwards, he was killed in action.

Mother's death left me numb. But when Davos was killed, my whole world fell apart. It was only one section to the end of the class session, and I'll never know how I got through it. There was a military memorial service, and I cried all through it. I know I was being very unmilitary, but I didn't care. The only person I could talk to was gone.

As I look back, I realize if I wasn't in class or drilling, I had my nose in a tape. It's a wonder any of the other cadets knew I existed. But all those faceless uniforms turned out to be good friends. They all stood by me. They coached me through final exams and generally kept me going. A barracksmate I hardly knew took me home with her over term break. With their help, I gradually pulled myself back together, and vowed I'd be the best Viper pilot ever. Davos was going to be proud of me!

So I threw myself into my studies. Unfortunately, some of my zeal rubbed off on my drill team work. I never did try out for the Precision Flight Squad. And when graduation came, instead of being posted to a battlestar, I was kept on as a drill instructor! Of course, I protested this as high as I dared, but I was stuck with it. So I did my job with the drill team, got in as much flight time as possible, and kept putting in for a transfer.

Several sections after my graduation, we began to hear the first rumours of peace with the Cylons. I followed the news with great interest. If peace became a fact, there'd be less need for pilots and more for drill instructors, and I'd never get out of the Academy!

As time passed, peace seemed more and more certain, and I realized there was likely to be a lot of pomp-and-circumstance and pass-in-review. So, much as I hated the Cylons, I was determined that the drill team would give its best performance ever! I worked my team to near mutiny — and myself to near collapse. It all came to a head just when the peace announcement was imminent.

I was yelling at my team over petty little technicalities. Into this fracas strode the Commandant, who immediately called the Senior Medical Officer. I needed a rest, but the best they could do with the peace celebration so close was to order me to "get lost" for a couple of centars. I was upset, confused, and tense, so I checked out a shuttle and went for a flight to calm down. My conscious mind was on our drill, but my subconscious must have been piloting, because I soon found myself outside the city in the area where I'd grown up. I set the shuttle down near where our house had been and wandered the woods, remembering.

I heard the sound of fighter craft approaching and thought the Precision Flight Squad must be practicing. Then I saw the hated disc-shaped craft pass overhead, and keep coming. And coming. And coming! "Great Lords of Kobol! It's half the Cylon Empire!" I thought. But what was it? A salute of some sort? Then the firing began.

I raced back to my shuttle and started for the Academy. But my movement caught the attention of one of the Cylon ships, and it came after me. I headed back to the woods to lose him, but he had twice my maneuverability. It was only a matter of time before I got hit. I set the shuttle for slow speed and low-level flight, then bailed out. Fortunately, I landed in one piece, and I headed for the only safe place I knew, a cave my brother and I discovered as kids. I heard the shuttle explode and hoped the Cylons wouldn't get wise to my deception.

The cave was in the far bank of a small stream. To reach it without getting our feet wet, Davos and I used to hop across stones upstream, then carefully balance our way along a narrow shore. That was the least of my worries now, and I just went splashing across. I almost didn't find the cave. It had been quite a few yahrens, and underbrush hid the opening. Also, it was smaller than I remembered -- or rather, I had grown. I barely managed to squeeze through the opening. Inside, I found I could no longer sit upright; I had to curl myself into a ball on the floor. The Cylon bombardment caused loose rocks to tumble down on me, and I remember wondering if the whole cave was going to collapse.

A rock must have hit my head, because the next thing I knew, it was daylight. It took a moment to remember where I was and how I got there. I almost panicked when I found I couldn't move. I was incredibly stiff, cramped, and half-buried under loose rocks and dirt. I could move my arms enough to push the larger rocks out the mouth of the cave. Then I wiggled around until I could crawl out. I lay in the stream until I could straighten enough to move.

It was mid-day, going on afternoon, and I set out on foot for the Academy. I kept well away from the main travel routes. Along the way, I came across a small group of people the Cylons had found. I won't describe what I saw -- I'm still trying to forget.

What I saw when I finally reached the Academy wasn't pleasant, either. The entire area had been leveled, and from what I could tell, all our fighter craft had been caught on the ground. There was only a handful of survivors -- if any at all. That same numb feeling I experienced at my mother's death crept over me. This can't be happening! Then I recognized a couple of the bodies, and I quit looking.

I haven't said much about how I felt about the Cylons. I'm not sure I know myself. Sure, I hated them for killing my family; after so many hundreds of yahrens of war and killing, I think we all grow up hating Cylons. It's become a way of life. Maybe I'd buried myself in my studies to hide from death. But now I'd been brought face to face with grim reality, and there was nowhere to hide. Ironically, I realized I was finally rid of that drill instructor assignment and could be a pilot if I wanted to. Except there was nothing left to pilot.

I wandered through the outskirts of the city without really knowing where I was going. The drill team doesn't wear lasers with their dress uniforms, so I was unarmed. I hid every time I heard a noise.

We don't wear the uniform cape, either, as it gets in the way of our routines, so I was getting a bit chilled as evening wore on. I found a slab (a wall?) that had fallen over and come to rest on some other debris, forming a space just big enough to shelter me. It wasn't much taller than my cave, but it was longer; and I was still stiff from last night. I made sure it was steady and couldn't come crashing down on me, then crawled under it. Somehow, I slept.

About dawn, I woke and found myself both stiff and cold. And my stomach noisily reminded me it hadn't been fed for two days. (I'd been too keyed up about the performance to eat.) Food would be difficult to find in the ruins of the city -- and would probably be contaminated anyway. I decided to head back to my old home. There, I could gather wild plants and hunt game. I would also have the cave, small as it was, for shelter until I could find something better. And until I was sure the Cylons were gone. I'd been very lucky to avoid them so far. I'd also need tools for hunting, and I was very grateful for the emergency survival class I'd had at the Academy.

As I picked through the debris, I found a metal bar about as big around as my thumb, and as long as my arm. Maybe I could use it to enlarge my cave a bit. I could sharpen one end against a stone and make a spear of sorts. Meanwhile, I could use it as a club, though I don't know what Cylon would ever let me get that close to him. Still, having some sort of weapon in my hands gave me confidence.

Avoiding the main routes again, I almost missed my cave. I finally found the stream and followed it. The cave would be cramped, but if I had this much trouble finding it, it should be safe from Cylons. I spent the rest of the night digging at the cave walls with my pry-bar, stopping every time I heard a noise. I never realized before just how noisy the woods can be at night. Judging from the sounds, I guess a fair amount of our native wildlife survived. That reminded me of food, but it was too dark to find anything, so I just kept digging.

When the sky first started to lighten, I crawled out, redistributed my rock-pile so it would be less noticeable, and went in search of breakfast. I didn't go too far; I wanted to be able to hide quickly if any Cylons showed up. It was almost full daylight before I found a handful of edible berries and a couple of rootplants. I returned to the cave. At least drinking water wouldn't be a problem, not with the stream right there.

I slept most of the day, and woke only when a Cylon vehicle passed by. But I didn't move, and it didn't stop, so I went back to sleep. I spent the evening

scrounging food and the night digging. This set the pattern for the next several days.

* * * * *

I was beginning to realize I wouldn't be able to enlarge the cave very much; it would never make a descent shelter. Also, I was a little too close to the Cylon center of activity. I had a terrifyingly close call when a group of Cylons marched right over the roof of my cave, and I knew I had to move farther into the wilderness. But I was reluctant to leave my sanctuary.

The matter was decided for me. Heavy clouds moved in one night, and it began to rain just as I got back from my morning foraging. As I curled up in the cave, snug and dry, prepared to sleep, I thought of all those Cylons out in the rain. "I hope you all rust solid!"

I don't know how much later I woke to find I was no longer dry. The rain had swelled the stream, flooding the cave. No wonder none of the wildlife had moved in here before me! Well, I could stay and get wet, or I could go out in the rain and get wet. I'd stay warmer if I was moving, and the rain would probably keep the Cylons holed up in whatever shelter they had. Also, it would wash away my tracks. There was no time like the present to move on.

Where to move was the question. I tried to figure it out logically. (A) I would need drinking water. (B) Streams generally run downhill. (C) Uphill led away from the Cylons and the remains of the city. Therefore, (D) I might as well satisfy my childhood curiosity as to where the stream came from.

I hiked the rest of the day and spent a very nervous sleep period huddled under some bushes. Come dawn, I was on my way again. As I'd long suspected, the stream led into the beginnings of the foothills of the Central Mountains. This was part of the wilderness we'd preserved on Caprica, and the Cylons would see no reason to go where no one had ever settled. I felt reasonably safe. Now I could set some snares for game without worrying about snaring a Cylon — though how I could keep a cooking fire going without their spotting it was something I hadn't figured out.

The stream finally led me to a cliff face, where it turned into a small waterfall. I couldn't climb it. But, in looking for a way around it, I found a generous rock overhang that could be my new home. It wasn't as invisible as my cave, but maybe if I built a latticework of branches, covered it with dirt, and transplanted some foliage...

I had my work cut out for me.

I lost track of how many days I worked on my shelter. A couple of sections? It was slow going, and many's the time I cursed the Academy for not making a knife or sword part of the dress uniform. You can't chop wood with a metal bar! But when I was finished, I felt very proud of my effort — and certain no Cylon could ever tell what had been done.

* * * * *

As time went on, I found I had to go farther and farther from my shelter to find food. One day, I was hunting in an area in the direction of the city, a-

bout half a day's travel from the shelter, when I came upon a large open meadow with the remains of a large private leisure dwelling on the far side. I spent the rest of the day imagining all the wonderful things I'd find in that house. When the sun set, I couldn't wait. I started to crawl across the meadow.

I was almost there when I heard something moving. I froze and listened. It was moving too deliberately for an animal; it had to be a Cylon. Why hadn't I listened to myself and gone back to my shelter? Now I was caught out in the open.

There was no place to hide except the building, and the door was on the far side. I crept cautiously to the wall and prayed the Cylons would just look around inside and go away. I got a good grip on my digging tool -- I never went anywhere without it -- just in case.

I hugged the wall and cautiously edged my way toward the corner. Straining to listen, I held my "weapon" over my head, ready to strike. Then my stupid stomach growled loudly. The Cylon must have heard, because it started toward me. I'm surprised it didn't hear my heart pounding as well! I listened to the approaching footsteps and prepared to strike.

Not yet. A few more steps. One more. Now!

I leaped out, prepared to smash the Cylon's head -- and found myself face-to-face with a Colonial Warrior, his laser drawn.

I'm not sure who was more surprised. We stood there for a micron, staring at each other, both poised to attack. Then the tension of living in hiding and the relief at seeing another live human being caught up with me. I dropped my weapon and hugged him. I was laughing and crying at the same time, unable to stop.

Another Warrior, a woman, came to see what was making all the noise.

"What the...? Where did you find that?"

"Would you believe she tried to brain me with a pole?" He held me at a distance, studying me. "Excuse me, miss, but have you got a name?"

I tried to get control of myself. "D-Drill Ser-Sergeant Mara."

"Drill Sergeant! You're from the Academy?"

I nodded.

"Did anyone else survive?"

"Not... Not that I k-know of. You... You're the first p-people I've seen since the invasion." Then I noticed something. These two were a lot cleaner than I was, and they weren't wearing Academy insignia. "You're from a battle-star? Which one?"

"We're a scouting party from the OSIRIS. I'm Lieutenant Corbin, and she's Lieutenant Ariella. And I think we'd better get moving before the Cylons



find us."

"I haven't seen any, but then, I wasn't trying to find any. They were supposed to be making peace with us! What happened?"

"That's what we're trying to find out."

They led the way to a shuttle hidden in the woods near the house. As we took off, I gazed out the front port for a last view of Caprica -- or what was left of it, anyway. It looked pretty lifeless. If I stayed behind, I faced Cylons and a rough existence, probably alone. Yet it was the only home I'd ever known, and I was sad to leave. At the same time, I was excited that I was finally going to serve on a battlestar. Talk about mixed emotions!

We reached the OSIRIS, and after a thorough debriefing, a good meal, and some time in Life Station, I was signed on as crew and given a locker and bunk. A real bunk. No more caves!

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Given the current somewhat nebulous state of affairs with regard to BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, our readers may find the following addresses of some value.

Universal City Studios, Inc.
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, California 91608

- Mr. Glen A. Larson

ABC-TV
1330 Sixth Avenue
New York, New York 10019

- Mr. Fred Pierce
President, ABC-TV
- Mr. Anthony Thomopoulos
Vice President, ABC-TV Entertainment
- Mr. Dan Rustin
Manager, Audience Information

ABC-TV
4151 Prospect Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90027

NBC-TV
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10020

- Mr. Fred Silverman
President, NBC-TV

CBS-TV
51 West 52nd Street
New York, New York 10019

- Mr. John D. Backe
President, CBS-TV

Since most of our readers are in the Chicago Metropolitan Area, we include the following local addresses.

Mr. Edward Spray, Program Manager
WBBM-TV (Channel 2)
630 North McClurg Court
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Mr. Doug Knight, Program Manager
WFLD-TV (Channel 32)
300 North State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

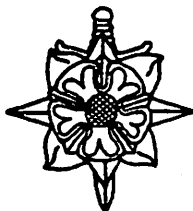
Mr. Harry Trigg, Program Manager
WGN-TV (Channel 9)
2501 West Bradley Place
Chicago, Illinois 60618

Mr. Jeff McGrath, Program Director
WLS-TV (Channel 7)
190 North State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Mr. Richard Lobo, Program Manager
WMAQ-TV (Channel 5)
Merchandise Mart Plaza
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Mr. Peter Strand, Program Manager
WSNS-TV (Channel 44)
430 West Grant Place
Chicago, Illinois 60614

MCA has acquired the first season of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA for syndication to local television stations; the package consists of twelve two-hour episodes. We suggest you contact the programming managers of your local television stations for more information on this. If they have not yet obtained the GALACTICA package for broadcast, we suggest you write to them and urge them to do so.



Colonel Lyra's Log

(Personal and Confidential)

I was fumbling through some old scanner tapes, trying to put my hands on a piece of information buried in them somewhere. I was all the way down to the very bottom of my records case; that should tell how far back I was going.

I happened across the Yahren Logs from the Academy. On a whim, I put them aside. I thought perhaps it would be fun to go through them when I had the time.

I was wrong. It was not fun. It seemed to me that Starbuck's picture was popping up every other micron. I turned them off. He looked too young and vulnerable. He certainly looked much, much younger than the last time I saw him, and the difference in yahren isn't that great. The difference is that he's no longer that vulnerable. I suppose he's been hurt too often.

I turned them off, but I have since gone back to them, looking for something else. I have not been able to pin down a picture of Starbuck's cohorts in my mind. I know I must have run across them. I know I cheered as loudly as any cadet at the triad games, and I have a very distinct memory of Starbuck playing triad. Very distinct. They must have played, too.

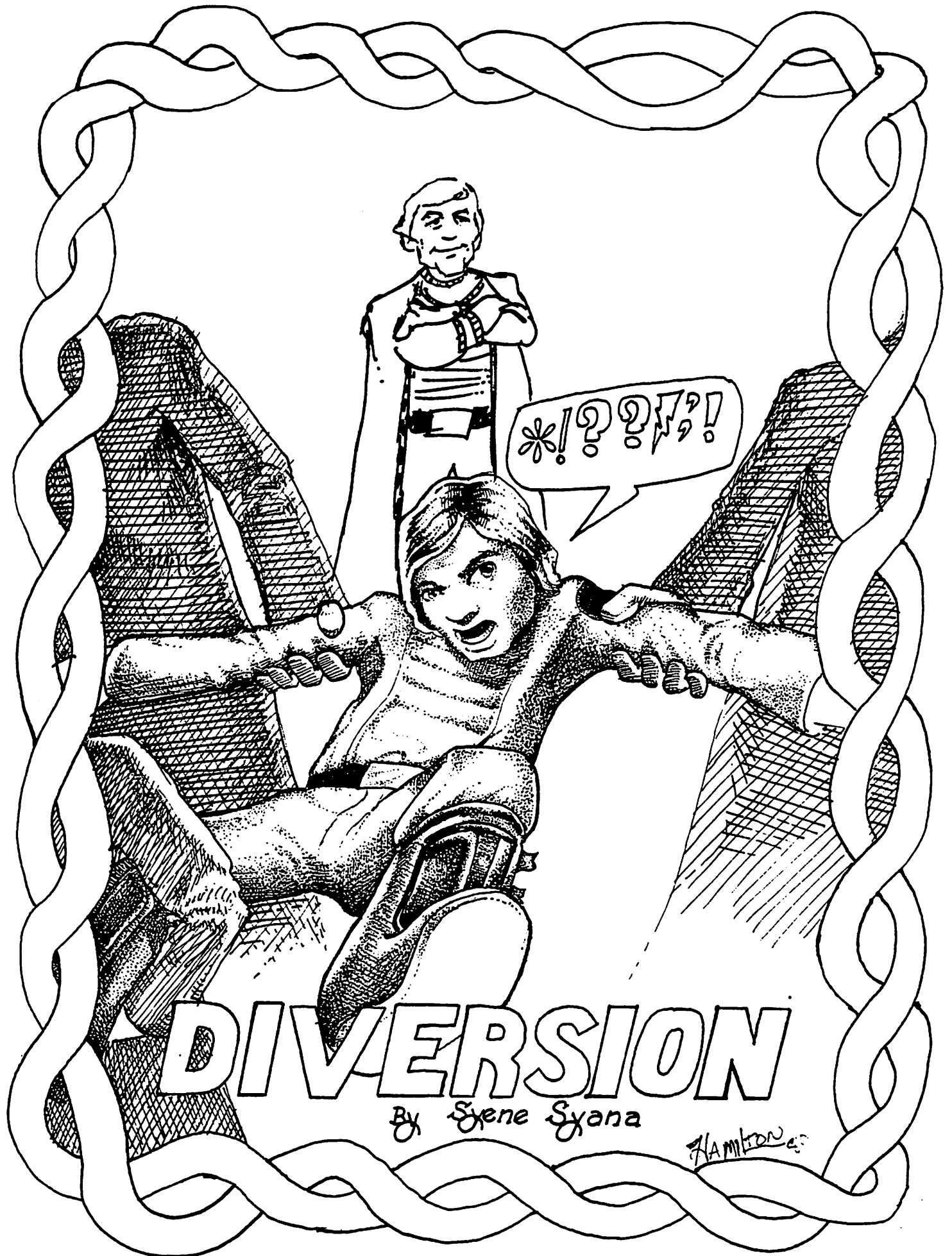
I finally found what I was looking for. There were the obligatory pictures of the teams, and next to them on the tape, several candid shots. One of them was of Starbuck shaking hands with a young man whose beauty is of the type that sneaks up on me. Diana was wrapped in his arm. I went back to the team pictures and verified his name.

"Apollo" rang a bell with me that his picture did not. I went into my teaching records (Yes, I still keep them. I want to prove to myself sometimes that I really did teach at the famous Caprican Academy.), and found Starbuck's name. Apollo was in that same class. I'll never understand why Starbuck was worried about that electronics class. He ranked third at the end of the period. Apollo was second. Someone named Boomer (Isn't that a strange name?) was first.

Apollo is one of Starbuck's buddies. I know it. And unless I very much miss my guess — and how can I when I have pictorial proof? — Diana is tied to Apollo.

I was thoroughly intrigued by what I'd found, and went through the tapes again, trying (unsuccessfully) to avoid Starbuck and look for Diana. I found her. No wonder she always has one more story to tell. I hardly saw a picture that didn't have the three of them, and sometimes a fourth, all together.

Stinker. I'll never tell her another tidbit. She knows too much already.



DIVERSION

By Syene Syana

Hamilton

"Diversion"

(By Syene Syana)

They had to drag Starbuck kicking and screaming off the bridge. The black-uniformed security guards were really having a time with him; it was taking three of them to hold down one very unhappy lieutenant. There was nothing of "going along peaceably" in Starbuck, not anywhere.

Apollo looked at his father. For some reason, the Commander seemed incredibly pleased with himself. Apollo was at a total loss. Adama had always treated Starbuck as if he were another son, and now to have Starbuck sent to the brig for such a minor infraction, and to stand there looking like the kroggle that got into the cream! It was too much!

"Father, what is the matter with you? These wagers happen all the time, and you never objected before. In fact, I know you've been in on one or two of them yourself. So why did you come down so hard on Starbuck this time?"

Adama looked very stern and military. "Apollo, you know that wagering in proscribed areas is an infraction of the Code. But for Starbuck to bring it openly to the bridge! That is simply not to be tolerated! It's about time that young man learned some respect for military discipline."

Apollo started to argue, then gave up. When his father brought military discipline into any discussion, there was no room for opposition. Turning to leave the bridge, and wondering what in the Twelve Worlds was eating at his father, Apollo almost ran down Cassiopeia as she made her way to the Command Center.

"Cassiopeia, I, uh..."

"You what, Apollo?"

Apollo sighed. "You might as well hear it from me. My father just had Starbuck placed under arrest for wagering on the bridge. Starbuck's on his way to the brig."

"Oh, no! Not again! Doesn't Starbuck ever learn? What can we do, Apollo? What's going to happen to him?"

Adama strode up briskly. "I'm going to convene a military tribunal, that's what. That boy has broken the Code once too often. It's about time he and those other pilots had a touch of discipline." He strode off purposefully along the corridor.

"Military tribunal! For wagering? Apollo! Can't you stop him?"

"I'm afraid not, Cassiopeia. For some reason, he really has it in for Starbuck." More to himself than to Cassiopeia, he asked, "What could Starbuck possibly have done to infuriate the Commander like this?"

Cassiopeia left the bridge, her erstwhile errand forgotten. When Apollo started talking about his father as "the Commander," he wasn't fit company, either. She supposed she ought to go and see Starbuck. If nothing else, she could try to keep him calm. He wasn't exactly calm at the best of times, but just put him in a brig and watch the fireworks.

When he returned to the bridge, Adama paced as he always did, no obvious expression to give away what he was thinking, his orders crisp as always. The bridge was far more quiet than usual, however, and even Colonel Tigh seemed to melt into the background. With every centon that passed, the personnel on the bridge became more and more subdued, more and more silent, until the tension was so thick you could cut it with a hand laser. When Adama walked by, people seemed to shrink into their chairs, hoping not to be noticed.

If there was silence on the bridge, the rest of the Fleet was buzzing. Word of the impending tribunal spread like sunbursts through the Fleet. No one could understand it. No one liked it. Everyone wondered why Adama was going to such extremes. Every barstool had its barroom protector; and every man, woman, child, and drone had an opinion he wanted to share -- most of them not exactly complimentary to the Commander.

Seeing as he had no mission to run, Apollo had walked through the GALACTICA's corridors; but everyone looked at him as though he were responsible for Starbuck's predicament. He retreated to the Officers' Club and discovered that was worse. Every Warrior in the place descended upon him, demanding that he go to the Commander and do something. Anything! Next, he visited the crew quarters, hoping at least Boomer would be Boomer.

Boomer was definitely not Boomer. He came down on Apollo with both feet, and Apollo finally executed a tactical retreat to his quarters.

* * * * *

Starbuck crashed heavily onto the bunk and buried his head in his hands. Then he came off the bunk as if he were responding to a red alert. He stalked around the cell, turned and paced it again; and when he ran into a wall, he hit it with both his fists as hard as he could. That brought tears to his eyes. He shook his hands to cool them and crashed onto the bunk again.

What had he done that was so very terrible? Nothing he hadn't done a hundred times before. And Adama had never given him a hard time about it before, either. Now he was sitting in the brig, going not so quietly crazy, and for a reason he couldn't

understand. Tribunal? For a little wager? It didn't seem possible. He boosted off the bunk again. He had it! Of course! It wasn't Starbuck who was going crazy. It was the Commander!

* * * * *

Apollo felt as though he were going quietly crazy. He was certain that something was going on he didn't know about. Why else had his father looked so pleased with himself when he had Starbuck taken to the brig? But what was it? Nothing he could think of made any sense. He attempted to make himself more comfortable on his bunk as he rearranged his thoughts. Was it just possible that the strain of command had finally gotten to Adama? No. Something was up. But try as he might, he couldn't imagine what. Apollo decided to have a private talk with Colonel Tigh in the morning. Perhaps the Colonel knew something he didn't.

When the door whooshed open in the middle of Apollo's sleep period, he reacted with all the instincts of a Warrior who has long been under fire. His hand slid around his laser before his eyes opened. It was a good thing he opened his eyes before he opened fire, though, because the sleep-breaker was none other than Adama.

"Apollo, I have a mission for you."

"Now? In the middle of my sleep period?" Apollo was griping, but he was also halfway into his uniform before he finished the sentence. "What are you doing here? Why not just post it, or call me on telecom? And... What does this have to do with Starbuck?"

Adama indulged himself in a hearty laugh. "I was wondering how long it was going to take you to put the two together. I'm afraid Starbuck just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Still, I don't think a few centars rest, or, for that matter, a little discipline, will hurt him much."

"Don't tell Starbuck he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. You know how much he counts on that infernal luck of his. Now, what about this mission?"

* * * * *

The flight was totally uneventful, but time-consuming. There were planets out there, all right; but each of them was uninhabitable for one reason or another. Apollo left the system and headed back to the GALACTICA. All he had to do now was report to his father and find some way to get Starbuck off the hook. He really didn't know how it was possible, seeing as his father had called the tribunal for... Lords! If he didn't get back immediately, he would probably miss the tribunal altogether!

The Viper skidded to a halt. Apollo had his helmet off before the canopy opened, and he vaulted out of his ship before the

ground crew could move in. He hit the turbolift, and spent the short ride pounding his fist into his palm, as if he could somehow hurry his ascent. He strode down the corridors at something slightly more dignified than a run, and found Sheba had held a seat for him in the tribunal chambers. As he slid into the seat, he gestured "thumbs up" to acknowledge the grimace from Starbuck that passed for a greeting.

Boomer leaned past Sheba. "By the Lords of Kobol, Apollo, where have you been? Or do you make it a habit to avoid Starbuck's tribunals?"

Apollo had an answer formed, but Adama gavelling the tribunal to order cut it off, fortunately for Boomer. On almost no sleep, and not knowing what his father had in mind for Starbuck, Apollo was not his usual even-tempered self.

As it turned out, Apollo need not have been as concerned as he was. As always, Adama had everything under control. The charges were read, the evidence presented, and witnesses called. They were numerous. Starbuck was declared guilty as charged, sentenced to time served, and ordered to report immediately to the Commander's quarters.

Starbuck stood behind the table with a look akin to shock on his face. He had obviously anticipated much worse. After all, he was certain the Commander had slipped his thrusters.

Apollo took Starbuck's arm. "The Commander did say to report immediately, Starbuck. Or do you want to face another tribunal?"

Suddenly Cassiopeia was entwined around Starbuck; there were great thumps on his back, and a hundred voices talking at once. Starbuck really didn't mind Cassie, but he did not care for being pummelled. "Immediately, huh? Well, let's get going, buddy." He unwound Cassiopeia, murmured "Later," in her ear, and joined Apollo on the way to Adama's quarters.

Adama was not in his customary seat behind his desk. He was reclining comfortably on the sofa, glass in hand. On the table were two more glasses of ambrosia, and a full decanter.

"I didn't think either one of you would tell me it was too early for ambrosia. Starbuck, sit down and be still for a micron. I want to hear what Apollo has to report."

"Father, there's nothing out there. All those worlds are good for is taking up space. None of them is habitable. Now will you tell me what this system has to do with Starbuck?"

Adama exhaled, and a variety of emotions showed in his eyes. "Apollo, we had just picked up a solar system on our scanners when Starbuck came to the bridge. There were nine planets in it. I knew we could not afford a repeat of what happened on Carillon. I did not want word of this system to spread through

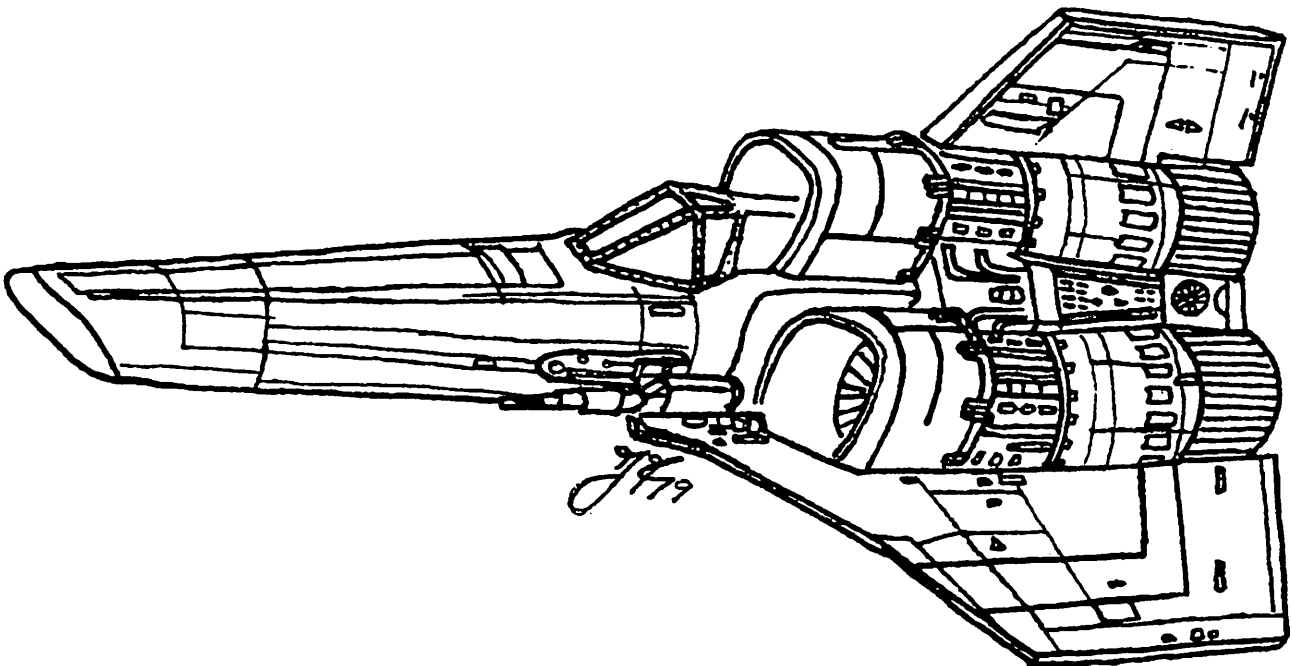
the Fleet, raising false hopes -- or worse. Even the bridge crew had to have something more immediate to think about. We were lucky. They were so overawed by the domineering Commander they didn't say a word, even if they did realize there were nine planets out there."

After a centon, he added, "Starbuck, I want you to know the time you spent in the brig was not wasted. It provided me with a military diversion every bit as necessary as stuffing uniforms with non-Warriors on Carillon." Adama proffered a glass to Starbuck, then one to Apollo. "Shall we drink to Earth?"

They drank, and Starbuck drained his glass. What he had just heard was as close as he would ever come to hearing an apology from the Commander. With extreme relief, he allowed to himself that the Commander was not crazy after all, just as sly as could be.

Adama sat back. "Now that you've spent some time in the brig, Starbuck, I'm certain we can count on your behaviour being exemplary -- for the next few centars at least."

Looking at Adama with his best schoolboy expression, Starbuck replied, "Wanna bet?"



"The Advisor"

(By Lisa Golladay)

The door to Adama's quarters slid shut without reassuring finality. A thin sheet of metal was no protection, the weary Commander thought. Another day of relentless fear and longing; another day of empty space and phantom Cylon attacks. He was no longer young, Adama thought, and he had long since ceased being care-free.

These centars when Adama left his fugitive's vigil on the GALACTICA's bridge and ostensibly slept were the loneliest in his life. He was too conscious of his role as leader to share his burden of responsibilities. Besides, there was no one to understand. Before, when he lay sprawled on his bed and felt like crying, he'd turned to his father, or to a trusted teacher, or to... No! He blocked Ila from his mind and contemplated the ceiling with a vengeance.

But what about... Yes, he'd almost forgotten. Men from other civilisations would fall to their knees or assume the lotus posture, but Adama merely sat upright and placed his hands on his temples. It had been yahrens since he'd last contacted the Advisor, but the litany sprang to his lips as though it had been waiting just behind a curtain. The litany had a life of its own.

"Adama calling Orson. Come in, Orson. Adama calling Orson. Come in, Orson."

He was standing. The uniform of the Orkan Knights felt warmly familiar.

"Well, Adama," a voice intoned. "It's been a long time."

"I've been busy," Adama answered.

"So I hear. But tell me in your own words about your adventures."

"Your Nosiness," Adama obeyed, "I am the commander of the last battlestar, GALACTICA, and a ragtag fugitive fleet carrying all that remains of humanity. I have held off innumerable Cylons and countless other dangers in order to preserve our race and reach a haven called Earth."

"So?" Orson asked.

"So!? Isn't that noble, brave, gallant, and glorious enough!?"

"There's nothing wrong with it, but you've been out of touch a

long time. I've got a new gig now," the Advisor explained.

"What is it?" Adama asked.

"You do something really half-assed and make pithy comments about the human condition. I play straight man."

"Oh." Adama was nonplussed.

"So," Orson went on, "what have you done lately that was really half-assed?"

Adama searched his memory. There were the Alpo commercials, but they didn't strictly count. There was the whole von Danniken business of seeking Earth, but that was old stuff. Wait... Yes, that would be it.

"Your Insipidness, our series was cancelled, but our loyal fans worked so diligently we were given a second chance. As soon as this news was made known to me, I went and found Earth, leading the entire Cylon Empire to that defenceless planet and turning this beloved series into a \$3 million remake of TIME TUNNEL." *

"You're on the right track, Adama."

The Commander was rolling. "Not only that, but almost everybody in the cast quit, except me and my featherbrained grandson Boxey, and even he's not played by the same actor. Instead, I've got a couple of Viper pilot clones and a kid who lights up like a conventioneer's necktie."

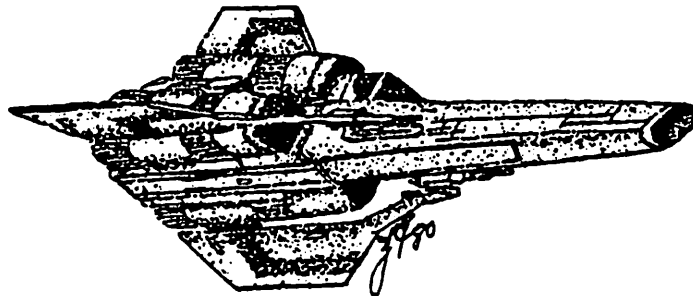
"Very good," Orson beamed. "And what have you learned?"

"I'm a schmuck," Adama replied.

"You'll turn into a comedy yet," Orson approved. "Carry on."

"Yes, sir," Adama said, and he placed his hands in the traditional Orkan Knights' salute. "Na-no, na-no."

He reappeared in his quarters aboard the GALACTICA, feeling better than he had since ~~ROMANZA WAS CANCELLED~~ the destruction of the Colonies.



(*Editor's note: We most sincerely hope not!!!)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beginning April 1, 1980, "Purple and Orange?" will be accepting mail orders for back issues and prints. Prices shown are for mail orders only. Orders will be filled as promptly as possible, but please remember some delays are inevitable.

"Purple and Orange?" #1 is currently out of print. Copies of #2, #3, and #4 are still available, but supplies -- especially for #2 -- are limited.

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"Purple and Orange?" #6 will be available around September 1. For price information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to us at that time.

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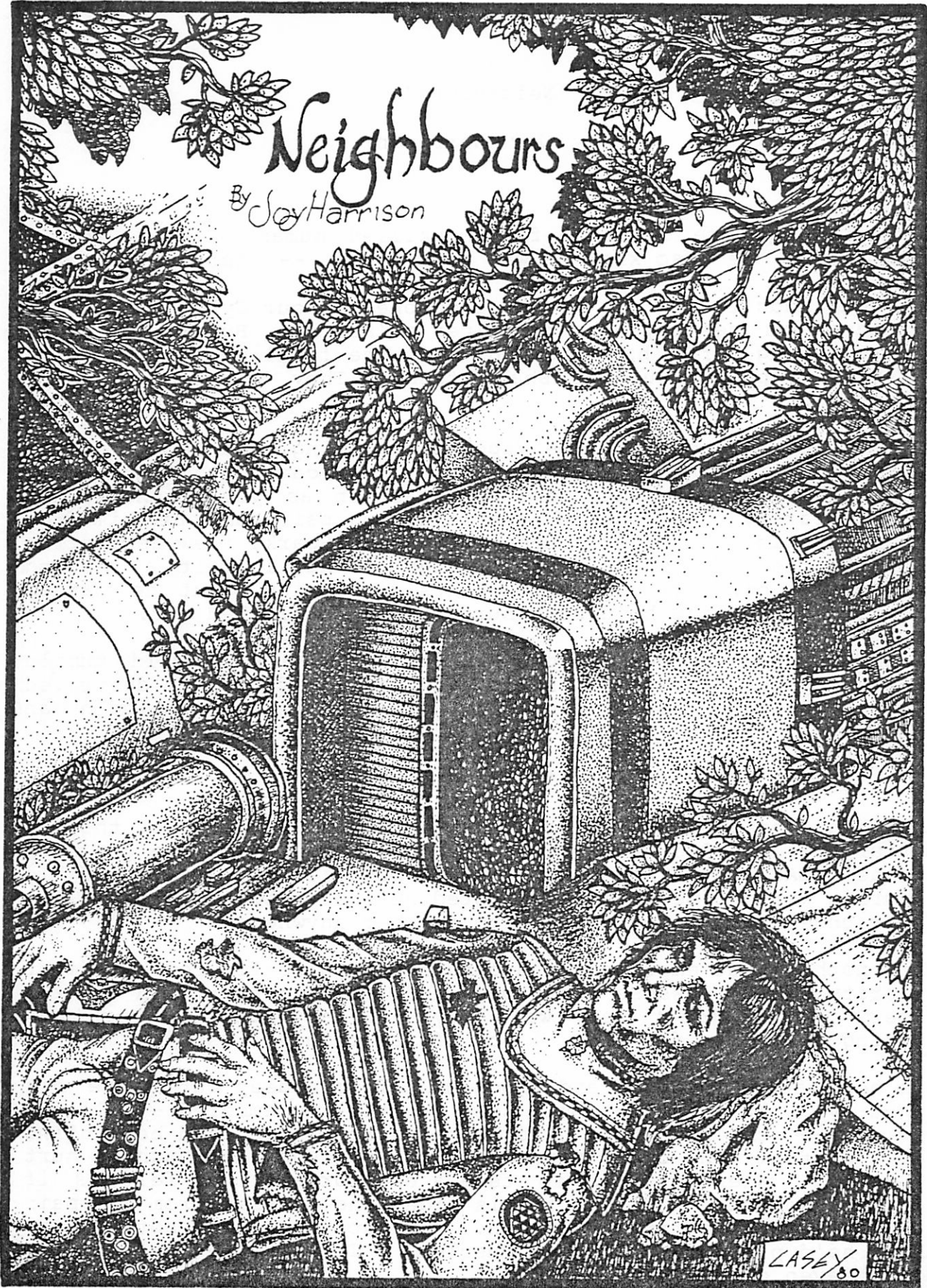
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Neighbours

By Joy Harrison



"Neighbours"

(By Joy Harrison)

Three Cylons were no match for a skilled human pilot. Apollo knew that. He also knew he was in trouble -- serious trouble.

The odds hadn't started at three to one. Four Cylon ships had already been destroyed by the Viper's lasers. But it was as if the remaining three had learned from the fatal errors of their fellows. Apollo couldn't shake them. They anticipated every maneuver.

A laser beam glanced off the Viper's port wing, and Apollo had to fight his ship to control her tumble. He came out of the spin firing, and watched with some satisfaction as yet another Cylon disintegrated. But one of the remaining pair came at him from behind, raking the Viper's undercarriage. Sparks flew as instruments shorted out in a blaze of light. Apollo felt a searing pain across his back and through his right side, but he barely had time to realize he'd been hurt before he blacked out.

This time, there was no one to stop the Viper's wild tumble through space. Apparently satisfied they'd effectively destroyed their opponent, the two remaining Cylons left the crippled human ship to her fate.

* * * * *

Apollo had no idea how long he'd been unconscious. Not that it mattered. He also had no idea where he was, or how to get back to the GALACTICA. That didn't matter much, either. Even if his injuries weren't serious, he doubted he'd ever be able to get his Viper under sufficient control to fly her anywhere.

With nothing but empty space around him, Apollo figured his first priority was to assess the damage to himself rather than to the Viper. He couldn't very well fly into anything if there was nothing around to fly into. So, first things first.

His head ached badly, and blood ran from a deep cut above his right eye. At least he could see; he still remembered -- all too vividly -- the last time he'd been injured, when he'd been blind for a section. He could move his arms and legs, although it hurt to do so. When he tried to take a deep breath, he felt as if someone had taken a laser to his side; he guessed from the pain that at least one rib was broken. His back hurt, but not unbearably; he'd probably torn some muscles. Torn muscles and bruises didn't even count.

The broken rib was probably the most serious of his injuries,

then. Apollo knew he'd be in considerable danger if the broken bone punctured his lung. But there wasn't a thing he could do about it at the moment. He'd just have to ignore it until he could do something. If he lived that long.

Next priority -- the Viper. Apollo began a complete status check, working through all the ship's systems. He still had power -- but virtually no control. The Viper was tumbling slowly, and Apollo had no way to stop her spin. The cockpit was a shambles. Scanners were totally inactive. An indicator light told him his automatic distress was transmitting, but there was no way of knowing if the reading was accurate.

Apollo knew a great deal about Vipers. They were highly complex, highly sophisticated machines, and they were frequently temperamental. But if one control system didn't work, there were ways to switch over to another. He tried them all, circuit by circuit, and was about to give up when he hit on something that seemed to work. The tumbling stopped. Apollo couldn't turn the ship, but he could change her attitude, her pitch. Which was useful, but only if he found a planet dead ahead. More likely, he'd run into a star.

Exhausted, Apollo carefully leaned back in his seat and closed his eyes. A couple of microns of rest, and he'd probably feel a lot better...

* * * * *

From the appearance of the stars around him when he opened his eyes, Apollo realized he must have been asleep -- or unconscious -- for centars. Startled by that realization, he straightened abruptly in his seat -- and immediately wished he hadn't moved. The sudden pain took him completely by surprise. He felt as if every muscle in his body was torn, every bone broken. That lasted only for a couple of microns, until the pain eased somewhat.

Blinking, Apollo wiped tears of pain from his eyes and tried to concentrate on the stars ahead of him. One of them, directly on his line of flight, looked decidedly odd, unstarlike, as if it might be...

It was -- thank the Lords! -- a planet. And he was headed directly toward it like a missile.

Apollo uttered a near-silent prayer as his fingers tightened on the Viper's flight control. He'd have only one chance. If he mistimed it or miscalculated the angles, if the planet didn't have enough of an atmosphere -- or if he didn't have the strength to pull his ship's nose up and keep it there -- he'd be very messily dead.

Only a couple of centons now. Apollo tensed -- and knew a sudden and very real fear as his vision started to blur. If he passed

out now...

He shook his head sharply, and his sight cleared. The Viper started to rock slightly, as she encountered the thin outer wisps of the planet's atmosphere.

Wait, Apollo told himself sternly. Wait, as the ship's slight rocking became more and more violent, as she began to be buffeted by winds her pilot could only guess at. Wait, for just another micron. And another...

Now!

Using both hands, Apollo wrenched the flight control back with all his strength, forcing the Viper's nose up, arrowing out of the atmosphere. Then back down again, then up once more, skipping across the atmosphere, using its drag to slow the hurtling ship. He was guessing at angles, at speeds, at timing, hoping only to reach the surface alive.

Weak and exhausted to begin with, Apollo found his vision blurring again. He had very little time.

Once more, the Viper dipped into the atmosphere, her nose glowing with the heat of her passage. The angle was far too steep; Apollo jerked back on the control -- and somehow kept from blacking out as hot agony stabbed through him. It hurt to breathe now, but he couldn't even think about what that might mean. His first concern was to avoid a fiery, meteoritic plunge to the surface. Somehow, he held on.

The crippled ship's angle of descent slowly changed; her speed dropped. And once again, Apollo let her nose down slightly. He saw something green rushing toward him but never knew when the Viper hit. One wing caught a treetop. Apollo was thrown violently sideways as the ship began to cartwheel. He was unconscious before the Viper struck the ground, where it dug a long, deep trench in the grass.

* * * * *

When Apollo came to, he was actually surprised to find he was still alive. He wasn't too sure he was very happy about it, though. He felt sick, and every breath was almost intolerably painful. He was alone, lost, badly hurt, with a wrecked ship and no way off the planet. At the moment, his chances of survival looked pretty poor.

Apollo remembered very little of the next few centars. He tried to reach his first aid kit; there would be drugs there to deaden the pain, to keep him going long enough to assess his situation. But even the slightest movement brought unbearable agony. At intervals, he would pass out, come to, then pass out again. He lost all track of time, knowing only that it was almost dark when he finally found what he was seeking.

The drugs brought almost instant -- if only temporary -- relief.

Apollo closed his eyes for a few microns, enjoying the cessation of pain, then opened them again to look around. The grass, the trees, the gently rolling hills around the meadow where he'd crashed -- everything looked so familiar, so like his home, that for a few moments he thought he was actually back on Caprica. Dizzy and confused, he shook his head slowly. He was dreaming, his mind wandering. It couldn't be. Caprica was countless light yahrens away. Whatever this planet was, wherever it was, it most certainly was not home. And there would be no one here to help him. If he was going to survive, Apollo would have to do it on his own.

Very slowly, very deliberately, he opened the Viper's canopy. He knew he was taking a big risk, but if the atmosphere wasn't breathable, he was as good as dead anyway. He leaned against the rim of the cockpit and waited, his eyes closed once more. He wasn't even sure he cared what happened.

Several centons later, Apollo decided the atmosphere must be safe. After all, he was still breathing, even if -- in spite of the drugs -- it hurt to do so.

Somehow, he managed to clear some of the wreckage around him and work his way out of his seat. Apart from a dull pain in his right side, he felt numb, and he was surprised at how hard it was to climb out onto the rim of the cockpit when he couldn't really feel his own body. Apollo sat there for a long time, too weak to do anything more, and not really sure what to do next. Finally, though, he gave in to necessity. He couldn't sit there forever. He slid to the ground and collapsed alongside the wreckage of his ship.

After several centons, he tried to get to his feet. He couldn't do it, and the effort left him totally exhausted. He knew if he didn't move, if he didn't find shelter, food, water -- and maybe some help -- he'd die there; but he didn't care any more. He hadn't the strength to fight any longer. He lay, dazed, half conscious, face down on the grass alongside the Viper. After a while, he closed his eyes, surrendering to overwhelming weariness.

* * * * *

A yellow-orange sun blazed high overhead when Apollo felt cool water touch his skin, his lips. He opened his eyes but couldn't focus on anything; all he could see was faintly orange light and, when he tried to turn his head, a blur of green and grey. He moaned, closed his eyes again, and felt himself lifted from the ground by a pair of inhumanly strong arms. He tried to protest, struggling weakly, but the new pain was too much for him; he passed out again.

Someone was carrying him -- as easily as he himself would carry a

child. Apollo never knew how long or how far he was carried. He kept drifting in and out of a blackness darker than space itself. But at last the seemingly endless journey was over, and he was laid gently on a mat near a fire, then covered with warm blankets.

When Apollo next became aware of his surroundings, he was unable to understand where he was or how he'd gotten there. He tried to sit up, to look around, but the slightest movement brought pain so intense he couldn't bear it. Eyes closed, he fell back weakly on the mat, then felt a warm, dry hand on his forehead as his rescuer bent over him. An arm slid beneath his shoulders, and a cup of water was held to his lips. He swallowed a little, then looked up into unblinking black eyes in a greyish-green reptilian face, a face that was at once totally alien and -- somehow -- strangely familiar.

"Who...?" He couldn't get the words out. He began coughing, and pain like laser fire stabbed through his side...

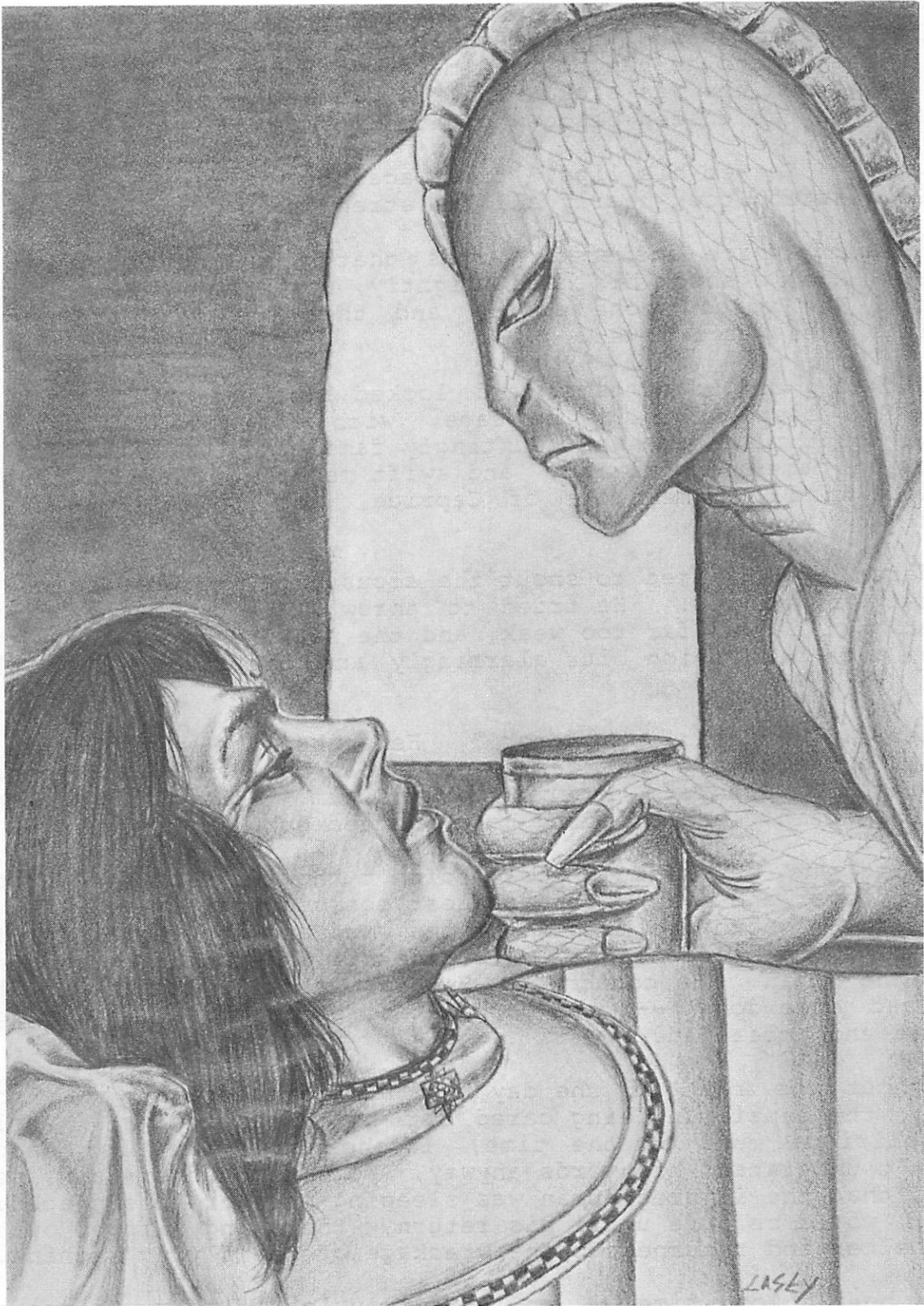
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Feverishly, Apollo tried to shake the soft, damp weight from his forehead, then opened his eyes. He couldn't see, and for a few microns, he was on the verge of panic, before he realized something was covering his eyes. He raised a hand to push it aside. His wrist was caught in a strong four-fingered grip, and his hand was gently forced down. A hissing voice said something he wasn't able to understand. Not the words, anyway. But he got enough of the message. Whoever, whatever this being was, it -- no, he -- was friendly; he was trying to help.

Apollo was more than willing to accept that help. He lay quietly as another blanket was wrapped around him. He was shivering, cold in spite of the blankets and the fire, and he knew he had a fever. He wondered idly how badly he was hurt, how sick he really was. But he wasn't sure it mattered. He wasn't sure anything mattered. He was too tired to care. He wasn't even aware of falling asleep again.

His rescuer squatted beside him, balanced by a short tail. He recognized the injured pilot as a human, a member of a species his people had once known, long, long ago. He cared for the human's injuries as best he could, but there was really very little he could do. Among his kind, he had some knowledge of medicine, but he knew nothing about human physiology. There were broken bones he couldn't set, although he did what he could to immobilize them; there were internal injuries he could only guess at; and the human's fever was dangerously high. He knew of drugs he could use, but he didn't know which might prove harmful, or even fatal to a human. Still, he tried. He did what he could, and somehow the human remained alive.

Apollo slept restlessly for a couple of centars, and his rescuer never left his side. When he awakened, a scaly arm was slid be-



neath his shoulders again, and he was offered more water. Then he was lowered carefully back to the mat.

Apollo tried to think, to remember, but could recall the crash only vaguely; and he had no real memory of what had followed. He knew only that he was sick, and badly hurt -- and very, very grateful to the unseen being who cared for him.

"Who...?" He wet his lips, tried again. "Who are you?" The simple question took nearly all his strength.

The hissing voice answered, words that didn't quite make any sense. Apollo shook his head slightly, still not able to understand. The voice spoke again, and then the damp cloth over Apollo's eyes was removed.

He blinked a couple of times and looked into the unwinking black eyes he'd seen before. The face, with its fine scales, its sharply outthrust jaw, was hauntingly familiar... With that realization came recognition, and swift memories flashed through Apollo's mind -- memories of Caprica, and of destruction and death.

"Murderer!" He wanted to shout the accusation, but his voice was scarcely a whisper. He tried to throw himself at the alien's throat, but he was far too weak, and the searing agony his effort caused made his vision blur alarmingly and brought tears to his eyes.

"Murderer! Murderer! Murderer!" He sobbed the words weakly as the alien caught him and gently eased him back down on the mat, wrapping the blankets securely around him. Then Apollo began coughing again, and blinding pain blotted out his memories.

The being who had rescued Apollo didn't know the word the human repeated over and over before he lost consciousness. But he understood -- both the meaning of the word and the reason for the accusation. It saddened him -- but he did understand. He didn't blame the human. He couldn't. His people still remembered what they had once done -- the machine horror they had unwittingly created and unleashed.

Throughout the rest of the day and all of the night that followed, the reptilian being cared for his human charge. Apollo was delirious much of the time, incoherent, but his rescuer couldn't understand his words anyway. Some time after dawn, satisfied that the injured human was sleeping more or less peacefully and would be safe until his return, the being slipped out of his shelter and returned to the wreckage of the flying machine.

It had been a long time -- an incredibly long time -- since his people had flown among the stars. Now they had no ships. And even if they did, they no longer had the skills to fly them. But the memory lingered in all his race, as did the memory of the humans who had come to be their neighbours, before...

Others would come seeking this ship and its pilot. The reptiloid wished them well. His people and theirs had never been enemies. He would help them all he could.

* * * * *

The yellow-orange sun had set and risen again, climbing nearly to its zenith, before the waiting being heard what he was listening for. He glanced at Apollo, who was asleep or unconscious again, checked to be sure the human's condition hadn't worsened, then once again slipped from the shelter.

He watched from the trees as the shuttle came down alongside the Viper, as two humans climbed out and searched the wreckage. He saw them find the trail he'd prepared, followed them as they headed across the meadow and up the hill toward his shelter -- and toward the injured pilot he'd cared for.

* * * * *

When Starbuck and Boomer entered the primitive shelter, they weren't sure what they expected to find. Maybe Apollo's body -- or what was left of it. Maybe wild animals, or Cylons, or hostile aliens. They went in with lasers drawn.

The weapons were unnecessary. Apollo was alone. He was lying alongside a fire, wrapped in blankets, his eyes closed. His face was very pale, and from the entrance, he didn't appear to be breathing. Starbuck knelt beside him, afraid to touch him, afraid of what he'd find.

"Starbuck?"

"He's alive, Boomer. Barely." Starbuck pulled away the blankets. Apollo's uniform and pressure suit had been stripped away, his injuries treated and bandaged. "I don't know how badly he's hurt. But it sure looks like someone's been taking care of him."

"Who?"

"No idea." Starbuck wrapped the blankets around Apollo once more.

"Maybe we should wait, take whoever it is back with us."

"If we wait around too long, Boomer, we'll be calling whoever it is 'neighbour' for the rest of our lives. The GALACTICA'll be out of range soon. We've got to get back."

The two Warriors quickly improvised a stretcher. When they moved Apollo onto it, the pain roused him. He moaned, opened his eyes, blinked uncertainly at them.

"Starbuck? Boomer?" Apollo's voice was a whisper, weak and faint.

"No one else, buddy. We're taking you home."

"How... How'd you find me?"

"Easy. We picked up a distress signal aboard the GALACTICA. Starbuck and I decided to 'borrow' a shuttle to come after you."

"That was foolish. My father..."

"Hey, no more talking, Apollo. Okay? Just lie still, and we'll get you to the shuttle. You'll be fine." Starbuck grinned, trying to hide his concern. "And don't worry about the Commander. I'll handle him. Somehow."

"Starbuck..."

"Enough!" Starbuck interrupted. "That's an order, Captain."

Apollo didn't say another word, just smiled weakly and wearily closed his eyes. Boomer glanced at Starbuck, who shrugged helplessly. They lifted the makeshift stretcher and carefully started down the hillside.

Apollo's rescuer watched as the two humans took their friend aboard the shuttle. He continued to watch as the ship lifted into the sky. Yes, it had indeed been a long time since his race had roamed the stars -- but the People remembered...

* * * * *

Several days later, when the GALACTICA's medical staff finally decided Apollo was out of immediate danger, Adama, Starbuck, and Boomer gathered around his bed to talk to him.

"You gave us quite a scare, you know," Adama told his son. "Dr. Salik didn't think you'd make it."

Apollo smiled. "For a while, I wasn't too sure I wanted to." He sighed, closed his eyes for a couple of microns; he was still very weak. "Just lucky, I guess."

"Luck!" Boomer snorted.

"What else? I should never have survived the Cylons, let alone the crash..." He shifted uncomfortably on the bed. His whole body ached, and it still hurt to raise his head or take a deep breath. He closed his eyes again for a moment.

"Buddy, I don't think you would have survived, not without help. Someone pulled you out of there."

Apollo stared blankly at Starbuck.

"Not only that," Boomer added. "But someone took very good care of you."

Apollo shook his head slowly. "I don't remember..."

"Well," Cassiopeia observed from where she stood just beyond Starbuck's shoulder, "whether you remember or not, I think you owe your life to whoever looked after you."

"I suppose I do," Apollo murmured. He turned to Starbuck and Boomer. "Did either of you see...?"

They shook their heads, and Starbuck answered, "Whoever it was stayed out of sight. And there was no time to try and track him down."

Apollo sighed. "I wish..."

"Do you remember anything, Apollo?"

"Not much, father. I was unconscious most of the time, I think. I remember the Cylons, and taking my Viper into the atmosphere to slow her, but..." His voice trailed off.

"Anything else?" Adama urged.

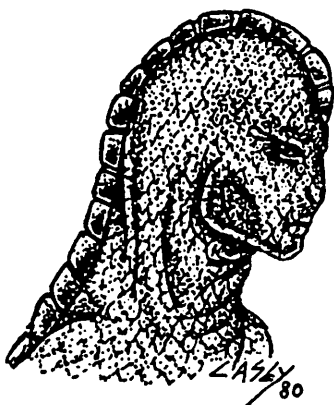
"Well, I think I remember seeing a face," Apollo replied uncertainly. "It was just for a couple of microns, but..." He hesitated.


"But what, Apollo?" Starbuck demanded curiously.

"Well, I remember, the face was alien, not at all human. It was scaly, sort of reptilian. And I think I saw a tail. But I... Well, I think I've seen that face before."

"Huh?"

Apollo grinned at Starbuck's startled reaction, then nodded. "Uh-huh. On our history scans." He glanced at Adama. "I know it sounds impossible. But I don't think I was imagining it. I think I was rescued by a living, breathing Cylon."





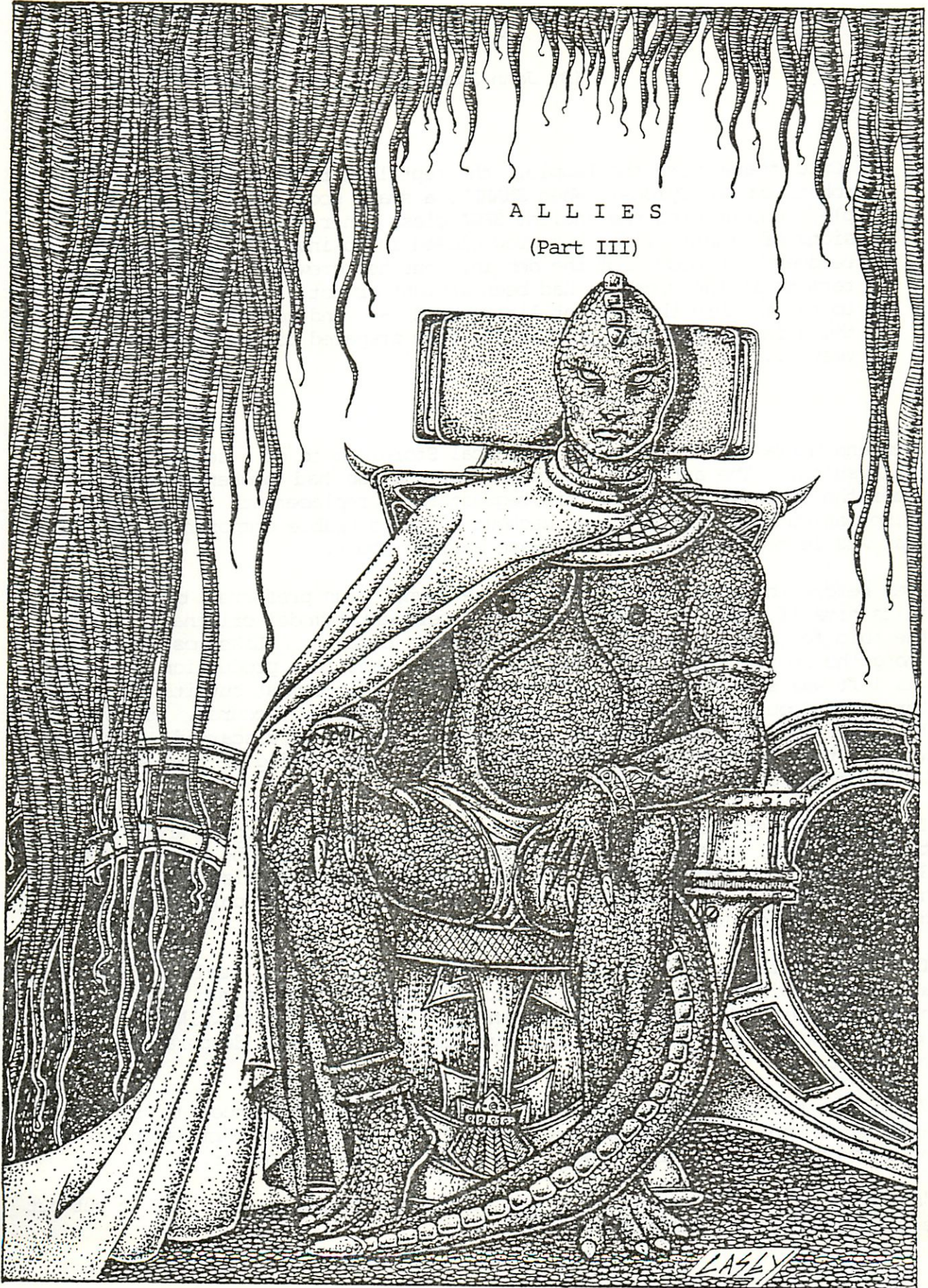
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A L L I E S

(Part III)



"Allies"

(By John Jones IX)

(Once there were the People, the reptilian race who created the robots called Cylons. When SHARER, a small scout ship of the People, encountered the ancient SEGA-class liner whose debris showed signs of organic life, her crew closed in to investigate. SHARER recovered a body from the debris, but her crew had no way to determine if the creature had been sapient or not. Seeking answers to the mystery the ancient liner posed -- and to the identity of the alien body -- two of SHARER's crew prepared to board the Cylon vessel...)

Urun and Makra went down to the Technical Storeroom to do a second checkout on their suits. The automatic equipment for the job had broken down years ago. After the tenth rejection of his request for a replacement, First Technician Gelbo Dan cannibalized all the checkout system's usable components and turned what was left over to the Sector Base Salvage Depot.

Even before the automatic checkout broke down, Urun preferred to work on the suits himself. SHARER's suits were an experimental model originally issued to the ship for a field test under her previous captain. Like most experiments among the People these days, the suits never went into production. All that was left was six of the best spacewalking and suit-combat outfits in the Sector Seven Scouts. They were not easily maintained, of course, and when the last handful of spare parts ran out, they'd have to be discarded. But meanwhile, they let SHARER's crew do things in spacewalking no one else in the Sector could do as easily or as safely.

In fact, with standard gear Urun might have had second thoughts about boarding the Cylon ship, mystery or no mystery. Taking risks was one thing. Leaving SHARER with only two people to get her home was something else. He could risk himself with a clear conscience, and even risk Makra with only a few backward glances. He couldn't throw away his ship.

The check on the suits went smoothly. Power, air, radio, seals, visibility, attachment points, water. He filled the water bladders and checked their seals; likewise the sanitary attachments. (Rule #1 of spacewalking: If you don't check the sanitary equipment, you'll find yourself desperately needing to use it.)

While the boarding party got ready, the Cylon ship continued to slow down. SHARER was now overtaking her so rapidly that Dan asked permission to slow down in order to have more power for the shields and disruptor.

"She's still dropping wreckage, Nai, and I don't want to bet that we put out all her weapons and sensors the first time."

"If she puts on speed, though..."

"Not too much danger from that, Nai. In another ten minutes, we'll be so close that Humo says he can pinpoint her drive and kill it if he's got enough power for the disruptor."

"All right. In another ten minutes, you can reduce speed. Signal me when you do, then put the SEGA's picture on the screen down here."

"I'll do just that, Nai."

Urun and Makra went back to work on the suits, with the captain taking an occasional look at his chronometer. Four minutes, five, seven...

"Nai, there's only work for one now," said Makra. "Why don't you go back up to the bridge and...?"

"Nai!" came Dan's urgent voice. "The SEGA's started maneuvering violently. She..."

"Any pattern?"

"Nothing the computer recognizes."

That didn't prove as much as it might have with a more modern Cylon ship. The SEGA's pilot might be using some evasive maneuvers programmed into him so long ago there was no record left of them in the increasingly confused data banks of the People.

"Put her on the screen."

The screen over the suit racks flickered twice, glowed, gave a brief glimpse of the SEGA practically turning somersaults in space, then went dark. A moment later, it blazed so brightly Urun blinked and for a sick moment thought the Cylons had blown up -- and taken their mystery along with them. Then the familiar smell of burning insulation reached his nose. One more piece of equipment down, to be replaced if -- not when -- they visited a properly equipped base.

Urun sighed. Makra did more. She cursed, then slammed her fist into the wall so hard Urun saw her wince. He went over to her, and as he approached, she turned and gripped him hard by both shoulders. He could see tears in her eyes.

"Nai, isn't it ever going to end? Fighting blind and helpless, not doing any good, the Cylons waiting for the victory they'll get cheaply if they just wait long enough!" She pressed the back of one hand into each eye to wipe away the tears. "No, I don't suppose it will."

"Makrala," he said softly. She blinked. This was the first time he'd ever used the diminutive of her first name when they were on duty. "Are you fit for going aboard that ship?"

"Are you asking me that because you really wonder, or because you want an excuse not to take me into danger?"

Urun not only blinked, he stared. Makra gripped both his shoulders again, then rubbed noses, and drew one finger lightly across his forehead from eye to eye. "Wouldn't it be easier for you if you stopped trying to hide the fact you're in love with me?"

"A scout captain has to..."

"Be sensible, and not put extra burdens on himself. It doesn't bother me to know you're in love with me, so why bother yourself?"

"But Dan and Humo will..."

"Be almost as happy as I am. They've been hoping you and I would pair off sooner or later."

Urun choked back laughter and managed to say with a nearly straight face, "Is this a scout crew or a marriage-making service?"

"Well, Karan, you know how you're always saying that these days everyone in the Service has to take on extra jobs."

Urun gave up and pressed his head against the cool metal of the bulkhead until his thoughts came in some sort of order again. It's out of the egg, it seems, and nothing out of the egg ever got back in. Well, perhaps she's right. A good pairing gives strength, and we both need all the strength anything lawful can give us. Now, if we can just find a lady for Humo the Weaponer...

He didn't think of finding one for Dan. The pilot was a former freighter captain who'd returned to space after his wife was killed and his farm destroyed in an "incident" with the Cylons. He had a grown son serving in space somewhere in another Sector, and a daughter who'd sold herself to an officer in one of the fortified enclave cities, but he got little help from either of them.

This time, it was Nai Urun who gripped Makra by both shoulders, rubbed noses with her, and traced a line across her forehead. Then he spoke to the bridge, and almost managed to sound as if nothing had happened.

"Urun here. The screen blew on us. What in the name of the First Egg are our brass-bottomed friends doing now?"

Dan laughed. "About the same as before. I'm pretty sure now the liner's not under control. She's done some things I can't imagine even a Cylon pilot trying with a damaged ship that old."

"All right. Let me know if anything changes."

Urun and Makra went back to work. With the suits fully checked out, they started on the rocket packs, tools, armour, and weapons. There, at least, SHARER was properly equipped -- although Urun suspected his crew had acquired some of the items by methods which would not bear close examination. He therefore carefully refrained from asking where that case of a hundred charged power packs or the laser cutter still in its original wrapping came from.

Fully fuelled rocket packs; armour for the joints, head, and torso; a cutter;

clamps and cables; a portable computer tap with read-out; a hand disruptor and spare charges for each of them. Bit by bit, the gear accumulated.

Makra groaned in mock despair as she felt its weight. "Are we going to try taking the SEGA apart, or rebuilding her?"

"I want to be ready for either one," said Urun, opening a locker and pulling out an engineering disruptor. It was short-ranged but high-powered, designed for work on plating and beams too heavy for a laser cutter. At lower power settings, it was also extremely efficient at demolishing Cylons. Again, Urun wanted to be ready to do either. He hooked the disruptor on his belt and slung its heavy five-cell power pack on to the life support system.

When they were fully equipped, each of them was carrying nearly his own weight, and in full gravity they waddled like Thremdan herd beasts. Urun called the control room, and, before asking about the SEGA, had Dan turn off SHARER's internal gravity.

"Now that we won't die of heart failure before we get over there... How is the SEGA?"

"She's not moving forward, and her power readings are down to standby. She's tumbling badly, though. I wouldn't call her safe to board, Nai."

"Can you slap a tractor beam on her and slow down the tumbling?"

The Weaponer's voice replied. "Easy enough, if we get closer. But we'll need to cut either the shields or the drive to have enough power for the beam."

"Not the shields," said Urun. "I won't believe a Cylon's safe until he's dead, and I won't believe he's dead until I've seen him melted down. Cut the engines." After coming this close, we're not going to run from the mystery now.

"Yes, Nai."

Urun took Makra's gloved hand. "Let's get into the airlock."

Fortunately, both locks still worked, so they didn't have to use Lock #2, risking contamination from the dead alien. The screen in Lock #1 gave them a clear view of the Cylon ship slowly tumbling end over end against the star-specked blackness of space.

"Nai," came the Weaponer's voice again. "We're ready to tractor her down, but we're picking up some bits of radio traffic. I think somebody's still functioning over there."

"Cylon, or...?"

"Don't know. All the language we've been able to make out sounds like Cylon, but we can't make sense of it. It's as if the Cylons had damaged speech circuits."

Or were speaking an old version of the Cylon language? If the crew aboard the liner were -- never mind how! -- as old as the ship herself, they would have

been programmed in the time of Cylon B, the first language the robots devised for themselves. Of course, SHARER's memory banks held no record of Cylon B, so it would have to remain a guess, but Urun didn't think it was a bad one.

"Well, we're as ready for them as we'll ever be," he told the people in the control room. "Get the beam on her, and we'll go across as soon as she slows down."

On this high a power setting, SHARER's main tractor beam made an audible hum inside the ship and a visible green light out in space. The greenness played around the bow and stern of the SEGA in rapid succession, slowing her down with a series of slow tugs. Dan and Humo were doing the job in gradual stages, rather than with one mighty jerk which would save time but might also crack the ship's hull. The Cylons might interpret that as an attack, and the surviving aliens (if any) might die from the loss of air.

At last, the SEGA seemed to be hanging almost motionless in space. Urun timed her through a quarter of a complete circle, discovering she now took nine minutes to go through a full 360 degrees. That was good enough -- it would cause no trouble getting a hold on the outside, and no gravity worth mentioning to slow them inside.

"Urun here. We're killing the air now."

He pulled down the "AIR" lever by the hatch and heard the whine of the compressor sucking air back into the tanks. The whine died as the air thinned out and the pressure needle dropped toward the red mark at the bottom.

"Hatch open."

Another lever, and the metal square slid aside, leaving them facing empty space. Urun pressed his helmet against Makra's and spoke directly to her without using the radio.

"Ready, Makrala?"

"As you said -- as ready as I'll ever be."

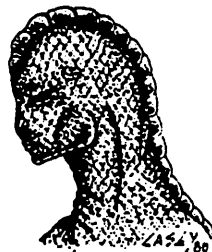
He wanted to say, "I love you," but couldn't quite get the words out. Oh, well, this won't be the last time we talk -- unless those Cylons over there are waiting for us...

Makra pulled herself to one side, to be clear of his rocket exhausts. He gripped one of the overhead grab rails, then with the other hand cut in the rockets on low power, and waited until the thrust stabilized. He sighted on the SEGA, aimed himself, and let go.

Gently, but firmly, the rockets pushed him out into space toward the Cylon ship.



(To be continued.)



DIANA'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice code retrieval only.)

I've wondered now and then whether anyone in the Colonies even remembered the OSIRIS. Before the Cylon attack, I mean. We were gone so long, without word, they must have assumed us lost yahrens ago.

When we left Caprica, no one expected our mission to be so extensive, so lengthy. We were to explore the nearest arm of our galaxy, our stellar island in space. But we went beyond, out to the vast halo of stars and clusters that surrounds the huge spiral cloud. The distances are incredibly vast, hundreds of thousands of light yahrens. We searched, we explored, we studied. But, at those distances, there was no way we could even hope to communicate with the home worlds.

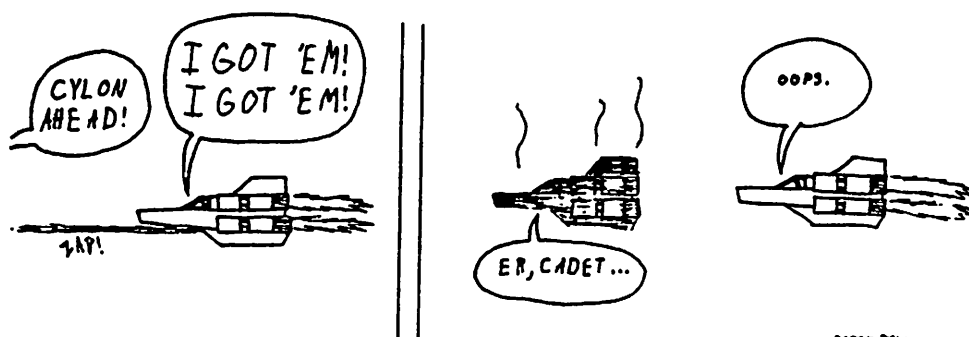
And with the Colonies in a constant state of war, how could anyone have helped but assume the worst?

Nevertheless, the OSIRIS did survive. In fact, we didn't encounter any Cylons until we were nearly home. And then, well, we flew into the midst of disaster...

Did Commander Adama long ago mourn the loss of his foster daughter? Or does he somehow know what he couldn't possibly know? And Apollo -- does he know I'm still alive? Does he sense it, even as I'm certain he lives? If anyone in the Fleet could possibly even suspect we survived, it would be they. Apollo because of the bond between us, because of the same thing that tells me so positively he's alive. Adama...

The Commander knows, if anyone does. I've said before that he's very special. He has skills, abilities I've never encountered before. He always knew things without being told. And sometimes he even seemed to know what others were thinking. His is an uncanny kind of power...

Do they know? Somehow it's very important to me that they do...



NUMBER FIVE!

"Purple and Orange?" Number Five. It's hard to believe. A year ago, our first issue wasn't even a dream (a nightmare?). In fact, ABC was still claiming BATTLESTAR GALACTICA would be back in the fall. They didn't announce cancellation of the series until mid-April. That's when Leah Bestler suggested a "one-time fanzine" to help save the series.

Well, the one-time fanzine got away from us. Our readers liked it so well (and we still don't know why!) that we felt compelled to write another. And another. And another. And...

Our staff has grown, and we've begun to get some material from our readers -- Karen Pauli, Judi Steck, and Bennett Snyder, to name just three. "John Jones IX" -- the professional author who is writing "Allies" for us -- says some of our material is near-professional in quality. High praise, indeed, from a good friend who wouldn't say it unless he meant it.

And then there are the artists. Todd Hamilton and Paulie Gilmore are both well known to fans and convention-goers. But what about Steve Casey, who's also a truly excellent fantasy artist? And Linda George-Himber, a switchboard operator who's never had any formal training in art?

Yes, "Purple and Orange?" has grown. Our issues are longer, more elaborate, and (we hope) constantly improving. We're planning a sixth issue for Noreascon II, and maybe (but only maybe) a seventh before the end of the year.

We'd like your help, too, of course. What do you want to see, to read in our zine? What did you like best in this issue, or the last one, or the one before that? What didn't you like? (Yes, we want to know that, too. In fact, we need to know...)

And what do you think of GALACTICA 1980? Do you agree with Judi Steck? Do you disagree? Did you love it -- or hate it?

We should point out that Judi's review is her opinion, and not necessarily the opinion of the editors. We may tell you our thoughts on the subject at some future time -- but for now, we prefer to withhold judgment until we've something more than a three-part pilot and the first half of "The Super Scouts" to use as a basis for our evaluation. All we intend to do at present is echo Judi in one simple statement: "It's not the same."

So... Did we win our fight -- or lose it? By Worldcon, we should all have an answer. See you then.

---Joy Harrison
Senior Editor

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